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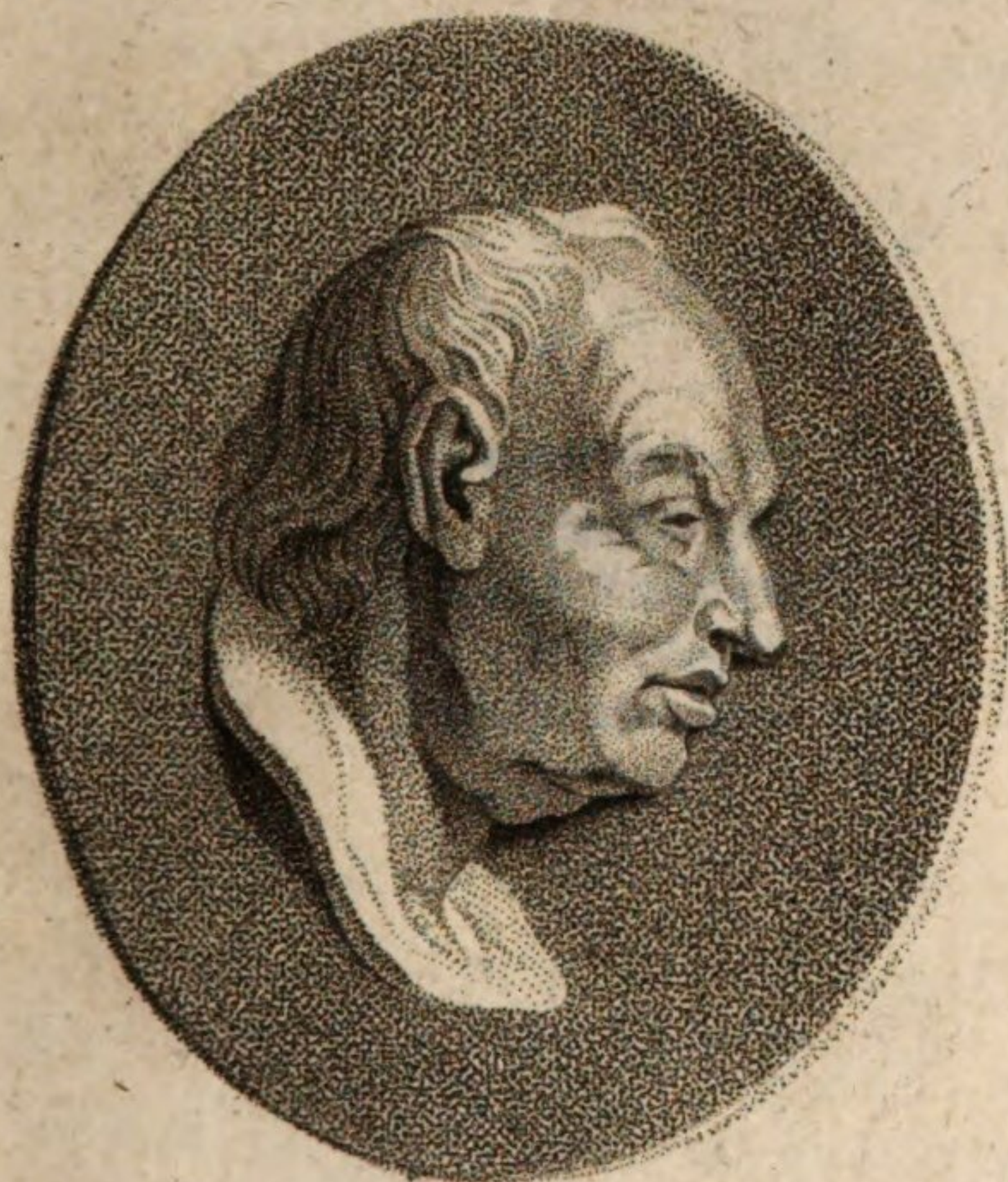


THE LIVES

of the most celebrated English Poets,

with Criticisms

Extracted from D.^r Johnson.



Johnson.

Parua.

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PREFACE.

TO THE READER.

A Work better calculated to convey a comprehensive idea of English Literature than the Lives of the Poets can hardly be suggested. That those, who may not wish to withdraw from their other avocations so much time as is necessary for the perusal of the voluminous work of Dr. Johnson on this subject, may yet have access to the information it contains, we offer the present result of our labours to the attention of the public. We trust it will be found, on examination, to comprise, in a condensed form, all that is essential on the subject.

Every Poet of eminence is here included, and the Reader will find the Lives of Spenser, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson which the great Biographer has omitted. Of the Editors' Annotations some are calculated to confirm conjectures or elucidate facts, and others to introduce anecdotes unnoticed by the Doctor, and with which probably he was not acquainted.

In fine, the volume now offered to the public contains information, compendious indeed, but we

hope, satisfactory ; and we flatter ourselves it will be found both agreeable and useful to readers of every description.

As it may probably be expected that we should say something of so celebrated a character as Doctor Johnson who was himself a poet, we begin by a sketch of *his* life—The rest will follow as nearly as possible in the order of chronology ; except the three last mentioned poets whose lives shall be inserted at the end of the work.



SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE LIFE

OF

DR. JOHNSON.

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, who has been styled the brightest ornament of the 18th century, was born in the city of Litchfield in Staffordshire on the 18th of September N. S. 1709. His father was a bookseller, and more than once bore the office of chief magistrate in that city.

When arrived at a proper age for grammatical instruction, he was placed in the free school of Litchfield, of which the master must have been a skilful teacher; for Johnson, when he stood in the very front of learning, being asked how he had acquired so accurate a knowledge of the Latin tongue, replied, "My master beat me very well; without that, Sir, I should have done nothing."

At the age of 15 Johnson was removed from Litchfield to the school of Stourbridge in Worcestershire, at which he remained little more than a year, and then returned home, where he staid two years without any settled plan of life or any regular course of study. He read, however, a great deal in a desultory manner, as chance threw books in his way, and as inclination directed him through

them; so that when in his 19th year he was entered a Commoner of Pembroke college, Oxford, his mind was stored with a variety of knowledge; and he had given very early proofs of his poetical genius both in his school exercises and in other occasional compositions.

For some transgression or absence his tutor had imposed upon him as a Christmas exercise the task of translating into Latin verse Pope's *Messiah*, which, being shown to the author of the original, was read and returned with this encomium, "The writer of this poem will leave it a question for posterity, whether his or mine be the original." The particular course of his reading while in college, and during the vacation which he passed at home, cannot be traced. That at this period he read much, we have his own evidence in what he afterwards told the King; but his mode of study was never regular, and at all times he thought more than he read. He informed Mr. Boswell, that what he read *solidly* at Oxford was Greek, and that the study of which he was most fond was metaphysics.

In the year 1731 Johnson left the university without a degree; and as his father, who died in the month of december of that year, had suffered great misfortunes in trade, he was driven out a Commoner of nature, and excluded from the regular modes of profit and prosperity. Having therefore not only a profession, but the means of subsistence to seek, he accepted, in the month of March 1732, an invitation to the office of under-master of a free school at Market Bosworth in

Leicestershire : but not knowing, as he said, whether it was more disagreeable for him to teach or for the boys to learn the grammar-rules, and being likewise disgusted at the treatment which he received from the patron of the school, he relinquished in a few months a situation which he ever afterwards recollected with horror. Being thus again without any fixed employment, and with very little money in his pocket, he translated Lobo's voyage to Abyssinia for the trifling sum, it is said, of five guineas, which he received from a bookseller in Birmingham. This was the first attempt which it is certain he made to procure pecuniary assistance by means of his pen ; and it must have held forth very little encouragement to his commencing author by profession.

In 1735, being then in his 26th year, he married Mrs. Porter, the widow of a mercer in Birmingham, whose age was almost double his ; whose external form, according to Garrick and others, had never been captivating ; and whose fortune amounted to hardly 800*l*. That she had a superiority of understanding and talents is extremely probable, both because she certainly inspired him with a more than ordinary passion, and because she was herself so delighted with the charms of his conversation as to overlook his external disadvantages which were many and great. He now set up a private academy, for which purpose he hired a large house well situated near his native city ; but this undertaking did not succeed. The only pupils who are known to have been placed under his care were

the celebrated David Garrick, his brother George Garrick, and a young gentleman of fortune whose name was Offely. He kept his academy only a year and a half; and it was during that time that he constructed the plan and wrote a great part of his tragedy of Irene.

The respectable character of his parents and his own merit had secured him a kind reception in the best families at Litchfield, and he was particularly distinguished by Mr. Walmsley, Register of the ecclesiastical court, a man of great worth and of very extensive and various erudition. That gentleman, upon hearing part of Irene read, thought so highly of Johnson's abilities as a dramatic writer that he advised him by all means to finish the tragedy and produce it on the stage. To men of genius the stage holds forth temptations almost resistless. The profits arising from a tragedy, including the representation and printing of it, and the connections which it sometimes enables the author to form, were in Johnson's imagination inestimable. Flattered, it may be supposed, with these hopes, he set out some time in the year 1737 with his pupil David Garrick for London, leaving Mrs. Johnson to take care of the house and the wreck of her fortune. The two adventurers carried with them from Mr. Walmsley an earnest recommendation to the reverend Mr. Colson, then master of an academy, and afterwards Lucasian professor of mathematics in the university of Cambridge: but from that gentleman it does not appear that Johnson found either protection or encouragement.

How he spent his time upon his first going to London is not particularly known. His tragedy was refused by the managers of that day ; and for some years the Gentleman's Magazine seems to have been his principal resource for employment and support. His connection with Cave the proprietor of it became very close ; he wrote prefaces, essays, reviews of books and poems ; and he was occasionally employed in correcting the papers written by other correspondents. When the complaints of the nation against the administration of Sir Robert Walpole became loud, and a motion was made, february 13th 1740-1, to remove him from his Majesty's counsels for ever, Johnson was pitched upon by Cave to write what was in the Magazine intitled *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput*, but was understood to be the speeches of the most eminent members in both houses of Parliament. These orations, which induced Voltaire to compare British with ancient eloquence, were hastily sketched by Johnson while he was not yet 32 years old, while he was little acquainted with life, while he was struggling not for distinction but for existence. Perhaps in none of his writings has he given a more conspicuous proof of a mind prompt and vigorous almost beyond conception : for they were composed from scanty notes taken by illiterate persons employed to attend in both houses ; and sometimes he had nothing communicated to him but the names of the several speakers, and the part which they took in the debate.

His separate publications, which at this time

attracted the greatest notice, vere, "*London*, a Poem in imitation of Juvenal's third Satire ;" "*Marmor Norfolciense*, an Essay on an ancient prophetic inscription in Monkish Rhyme, lately discovered near Lynne in Norfolk ;" and "A complete Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage from the malicious and scandalous aspersions of Mr. Brook, author of *Gustavus Vasa*." The poem, which was published in 1738 by Dodsley, is universally known and admired as the most spirited instance in the English language of ancient sentiments adapted to modern topics. Pope, who then filled the poetical throne without a rival, being informed that the author's name was Johnson, and that he was an obscure person, replied, "He will soon be *déterré*." The other two pamphlets which were published in 1739 are filled with keen satire on the government : and though Sir John Hawkins has thought fit to declare that they display neither learning nor wit, Pope was of a different opinion ; for, in a note of his preserved by Mr. Boswell, he says, that "the whole of the Norfolk Prophecy is very humorous".

Mrs. Johnson, who went to London soon after her husband, now lived sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, sometimes in the city and sometimes at Greenwich : but Johnson himself was oftener to be found at St. John's Gate, where the *Gentleman's Magazine* was published, than in his own lodgings. It was there that he became acquainted with *Savage*, with whom he was induced, probably by the similarity of their circumstances, to

contract a very close friendship; and such was their extreme necessities, that they have often wandered whole nights in the street for want of money to procure them a lodging. In one of these nocturnal rambles, when their distress was almost incredible, so far were they from being depressed by their situation, that in high spirits, and brimful of patriotism, they traversed St. James's Square for several hours, inveighed against the minister, and, as Johnson said in ridicule of himself, his companion, and all such patriots, "resolved that *they* would stand by their Country!" In 1744 he published the life of his unfortunate companion; a work which, had he never written any thing else, would have placed him very high in the rank of authors. His narrative is remarkably smooth and well disposed; his observations are just, and his reflections disclose the inmost recesses of the human heart.

In 1749, when Drury-lane theatre was opened under the management of Garrick, Johnson wrote a prologue for the occasion, which for just dramatic criticism on the whole range of the English stage, as well as for poetical excellence, is confessedly unrivalled. But this year is, in his life, distinguished as the epoch when his arduous and important work, the Dictionary of the English Language, was announced to the world by the publication of its plan or prospectus addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. From that nobleman Johnson was certainly led to expect patronage and encouragement; and it seems to be equally certain

that his lordship expected, when the book should be published, to be honoured with the dedication. The expectations of both were disappointed. Lord Chesterfield, after seeing the lexicographer once or twice, suffered him to be repulsed from his door: but afterwards, thinking to conciliate him when the work was upon the eve of publication, he wrote two papers in "The World," warmly recommending it to the public. This artifice was seen through; and Johnson, in very polite language, rejected his lordship's advances, letting him know, that he was unwilling the public should consider him as owing to a patron that which Providence had enabled him to do for himself. This great and laborious work its author expected to complete in three years, but he was certainly employed upon it seven; for we know that it was begun in 1747, and the last sheet was sent to the press at the end of the year 1754. When we consider the nature of the undertaking, it is indeed astonishing that it was finished so soon, since it was written, as he says, "with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow." The sorrow to which he here alludes is probably that which he felt for the loss of his wife, who died on the 17th of March O. S. 1752, and whom he continued to lament as long as he lived.

The Dictionary did not occupy his whole time: for, while he was pushing it forward, he fitted his

Tragedy for the stage ; wrote the lives of several eminent men for the Gentleman's Magazine ; published an Imitation of the 10th Satire of Juvenal, intituled " The Vanity of Human Wishes ; " and began and finished " The Rambler. " This last work is so well known, that it is hardly necessary to say that it was a periodical paper published twice a week, from the 20th of March 1750 to the 14th of March 1752 inclusive : but to give our readers some notion of the vigour and promptitude of the author's mind, it may not be improper to observe that, notwithstanding the severity of his other labours, all the assistance which he received does not amount to five papers ; and that many of the most masterly of those unequalled essays were written on the spur of the occasion, and never seen entire by the author till they returned to him from the press.

Soon after the Rambler was concluded, Dr. Hawkesworth projected " The Adventurer " upon a similar plan ; and by the assistance of friends he was enabled to carry it on with almost equal merit. For a short time, indeed, it was the most popular work of the two ; and the papers with the signature T, which are confessedly the most splendid in the whole collection, are now known to have been communicated by Johnson, who received for each the sum of two guineas. This was double the price for which he sold sermons to such clergymen as either would not or could not compose their own discourses ; and of sermon-writing he seems to have made a kind of trade.

Though he had exhausted, during the time that he was employed on the Dictionary, more than the sum for which the booksellers had bargained for the copy, yet by means of the Rambler, Adventurer, sermons, and other productions of his pen, he now found himself in greater affluence than he had ever done before; and as the powers of his mind, distended by long and severe exercise, required relaxation to restore them to their proper tone, he appears to have done little or nothing from the closing of the Adventurer till the year 1756, when he submitted to the office of reviewer in the Literary Magazine. Of his reviews, by far the most valuable is that of Soame Jennyns's "Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil." Never were wit and metaphysical acuteness more closely united than in that criticism, which exposes the weakness and holds up to contempt the reasoning of those vain mortals, who presumptuously attempt to grasp the scale of existence, and to form plans of conduct for the Creator of the universe. But the furnishing of magazines, reviews, and even newspapers with literary intelligence, and authors of books with dedications and prefaces, was considered as an employment unworthy of Johnson. It was therefore proposed by the booksellers that he should give a new edition of the dramas of Shakespeare; a work which he had projected many years before, and of which he had published a specimen which was commended by Warburton. When one of his friends expressed a hope that this employment would furnish him with amusement

and add to his fame, he replied, "I look upon it as I did upon the Dictionary; it is all work; and my inducement to it is not love or desire of fame, but the want of money which is the only motive to writing that I know of." He issued proposals, however, of considerable length, in which he showed that he knew perfectly what a variety of research such an undertaking required: but his indolence prevented him from pursuing it with diligence, and it was not published till many years afterwards.

On the 15th of april 1758 he began a new periodical paper intituled "The Idler," which came out every Saturday in a weekly newspaper, called "The Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette," published by Newbery. Of these essays, which were continued till the 5th of april 1760, many were written as hastily as an ordinary letter; and one in particular composed at Oxford was begun only half an hour before the departure of the post which carried it to London. About this time he had the offer of a living of which he might have rendered himself capable by entering into orders. It was a rectory in a pleasant country of such yearly value as would have been an object to one in much better circumstances; but sensible, as it is supposed, of the asperity of his temper, he declined it, saying, "I have not the requisites for the office, and I cannot in my conscience shear the flock which I am unable to feed."

Soon after the death of his mother, which happened in the year 1759, he wrote his "Rasselas

Prince of Abyssinia," that with the profits he might defray the expence of his mother's funeral, and pay some debts which she left. He told a friend, that he received for the copy 100l. and 25l. more when it came to a second edition; that he wrote it in the evenings of one week, sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over.

Hitherto, notwithstanding his various publications, he was poor, and obliged to provide by his labour for the wants of the day; but having been early in 1762 represented to the King as a very learned and good man without any certain provision, his Majesty was pleased to grant him a pension, which Lord Bute, then first minister, assured him "was not given for any thing which he *was to do*, but for what he *had already done*." A fixed annuity of three hundred pounds a-year, if it diminished his distress, increased his indolence: for as he constantly avowed that he had no other motive for writing than to gain money; as he had now what was abundantly sufficient for all his purposes; as he delighted in conversation, and was visited and admired by the witty, the elegant, and the learned, very little of his time was passed in solitary study. Solitude was indeed his aversion; and that he might avoid it as much as possible, Sir Joshua Reynolds and he, in 1764, instituted a club, which existed long without a name, but was afterwards known by the title of the *Literary Club*. It consisted of some of the most enlightened men of the age who met at the Turk's Head in Gerard-street,

Soho, one evening every week at seven, and till a late hour enjoyed "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."

In 1765, when Johnson was more than usually oppressed with constitutional melancholy, he was fortunately introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and member of parliament for the borough of Southwark : and it is but justice to acknowledge, that to the assistance which Mr. and Mrs. Thrale gave him, to the shelter which their house afforded him for 16 or 17 years, and to the pains which they took to sooth or repress his uneasy fancies, the public is probably indebted for some of the most masterly as well as most popular works which he ever produced. At length, in the october of this year, he gave to the world his edition of Shakespeare, which is chiefly valuable for the preface, where the excellencies and defects of that immortal bard are displayed with such judgement as must please every man whose taste is not regulated by the standard of fashion or national prejudice. In 1767 he was honoured by a private conversation with the King in the library at the Queen's house : and two years afterwards upon the establishment of the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture, &c. he was nominated Professor of ancient Literature; an office merely honorary, and conferred on him, as is supposed, at the recommendation of his friend the president.

In the variety of subjects on which he had hitherto exercised his pen, he had forborn, since the

administration of Sir Robert Walpole, to meddle with the disputes of contending factions; but having seen with indignation the methods which, in the business of Mr. Wilkes, were taken to work upon the populace, he published in 1770 a pamphlet, intitled "The False Alarm," in which he asserts, and labours to prove by a variety of arguments founded on precedents, that the expulsion of a member of the house of commons is equivalent to exclusion, and that no such calamity as the subversion of the constitution was to be feared from an act warranted by usage, which is the law of parliament. Whatever may be thought of the principles maintained in this publication, it unquestionably contains much wit and much argument, expressed in the author's best style of composition; and yet it is known to have been written between eight o'clock on Wednesday night and twelve o'clock on the Thursday night, when it was read to Mr. Thrale upon his coming from the house of commons. In 1770 he published another political pamphlet, intitled, "Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands," in which he attacked Junius; and he ever afterwards delighted himself with the thought of having destroyed that able writer whom he certainly surpassed in nervous language and pointed ridicule.

In 1773, he visited with Mr. Boswell some of the most considerable of the Hebrides or Western Islands of Scotland, and published an account of his Journey in a volume which abounds in extensive philosophical views of society, ingenious

sentiments, and lively descriptions, but which offended many persons by the violent attack which it made on the authenticity of the poems attributed to Ossian. For the degree of offence that was taken, the book can hardly be thought to contain a sufficient reason : if the antiquity of these poems be yet doubted, it is owing more to the conduct of their editor than to the violence of Johnson. In 1774, the parliament being dissolved, he addressed to the electors of Great Britain a pamphlet, intitled "The Patriot;" of which the design was to guard them from imposition, and teach them to distinguish true from false patriotism. In 1775 he published "Taxation no Tyranny," in answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. These essays drew upon him numerous attacks, all of which he heartily despised; for though it has been supposed that "A letter addressed to Dr. Samuel Johnson, occasioned by his Political Publications," gave him great uneasiness, the contrary is manifest from his having, after the appearance of that letter, collected them into a volume with the title of "Political Tracts by the author of the Rambler." In 1765 Trinity College, Dublin, had created him LL. D. by *diploma*, and he now received the same honour from the University of Oxford; an honour with which, though he did not boast of it, he was highly gratified. In 1777 he was induced, by a case of a very extraordinary nature, to exercise that humanity which in him was obedient to every call. Dr. William Dodd, a clergyman under sentence of death for the

crime of forgery, found means to interest Johnson in his behalf, and procured from him two of the most energetic compositions of the kind ever seen; the one a petition from himself to the King, the other a like address from his wife to the Queen. These petitions failed of success.

The principal booksellers in London having determined to publish a body of English Poetry, Johnson was prevailed upon to write the Lives of the Poets, and give a character of the works of each. This task he undertook with alacrity, and executed it in such a manner as must convince every competent reader that, as a biographer and a critic, no nation can produce his equal. The work was published in ten small volumes, of which the first four came abroad 1778, and the others in 1781. While the world in general was filled with admiration of the stupendous powers of that man who, at the age of seventy-two, and labouring under a complication of diseases, could produce a work which displays so much genius and so much learning, there were narrow circles in which prejudice and resentment were fostered, and whence attacks of different sorts issued against him. These gave him not the smallest disturbance. When told of the feeble, though shrill, outcry that had been raised, he said—"Sir, I considered myself as entrusted with a certain portion of truth. I have given my opinion sincerely: let them show where they think me wrong."

He had hardly begun to reap the laurels gained by this performance when death deprived him of

Mr. Thrale in whose house he had enjoyed the most comfortable hours of his life.

About the middle of june 1783 his constitution sustained a severer shock than it had ever before felt by a stroke of the palsy, so sudden and so violent that it awakened him out of a sound sleep, and rendered him for a short time speechless. As usual, his recourse under this affliction was to piety, which in him was constant, sincere, and fervent. He tried to repeat the Lord's prayer first in English, then in Latin, and afterwards in Greek, but succeeded only in the last attempt; immediately after which he was again deprived of the power of articulation. From this alarming attack he recovered with wonderful quickness, but it left behind it some presages of an hydropic affection; and he was soon afterwards seized with a spasmodic asthma of such violence that he was confined to the house in great pain, while his dropsy increased notwithstanding all the efforts of the most eminent physicians in London and Edinburgh. He had, however, such an interval of ease as enabled him in the summer 1784 to visit his friends at Oxford, Litchfield, and Ashbourne in Derbyshire.

His constant dread of death was so great that it astonished all who had access to know the piety of his mind and the virtues of his life. Attempts have been made to account for it in various ways; but doubtless that is the true account which is given in the *Olla Podrida* by an elegant and pious writer who now adorns a high station in the church of England: "That he should not be conscious of the

abilities, with which Providence had blessed him, was impossible. He felt his own powers; he felt what he was capable of having performed; and he saw how little, comparatively speaking, he had performed. Hence his apprehension on the near prospect of the account to be made, viewed through the medium of constitutional and morbid melancholy, which often excluded from his sight the bright beams of divine mercy." This, however, was the case only while death was approaching from some distance. From the time that he was certain it was near, all his fears were calmed; and he died on the 13th of december 1784 full of resignation, strengthened by faith, and joyful in hope.

For a just character of this great man our limits afford not room: we must therefore content ourselves with laying before our readers a very short sketch. His stature was tall, his limbs were large, his strength was more than common, and his activity in early life had been greater than such a form gave reason to expect: but he was subject to an infirmity of the convulsive kind resembling the distemper called St. Vitus's dance; and he had the seeds of so many diseases sown in his constitution that a short time before his death he declared that he hardly remembered to have passed one day wholly free from pain. He possessed very extraordinary powers of understanding which were much cultivated by reading, and still more by meditation and reflection. His memory was remarkably retentive, his imagination uncommonly vigorous, and

his judgment keen and penetrating. He read with great rapidity, retained with wonderful exactness what he so easily collected, and possessed the power of reducing to order and system the scattered hints on any subject which he had gathered from different books. It would not perhaps be safe to claim for him the highest place among his contemporaries in any *single* department of literature ; but, to use one of his own expressions, he brought more *mind* to every subject, and had a greater variety of knowledge *ready* for all occasions than any other man that could be easily named — Though prone to superstition, he was in all other respects so remarkably incredulous, that Hogarth said, while Johnson firmly believed the Bible, he seemed determined to believe nothing but the Bible. Of the importance of religion he had a strong sense, and his zeal for its interests were always awake, so that profaneness of every kind was abashed in his presence—The same energy which was displayed in his literary productions was exhibited also in his conversation, which was various, striking, and instructive : like the sage in *Rasselas*, he spoke, and attention watched his lips ; he reasoned, and conviction closed his periods. When he pleased, he could be the greatest sophist that ever contended in the lists of declamation ; and perhaps no man ever equalled him in nervous and pointed repartees. His veracity, from the most trivial to the most solemn occasions, was strict even to severity : he scorned to embellish a story with fictitious circumstances ; for what is not

a representation of reality, he used to say, is not worthy of our attention. As his purse and his house were ever open to the indigent, so was his heart tender to those who wanted relief, and his soul was susceptible of gratitude and every kind impression. He had a roughness in his manner which subdued the saucy and terrified the meek : but it was *only* in his *manner* ; for no man was more loved than Johnson was by those who knew him : and his works will be read with veneration for their author as long as the language in which they are written shall be understood.



L I V E S
OF THE
E N G L I S H P O E T S.

C O W L E Y.

ABRAHAM COWLEY was born in the year 1618. He very early took delight in reading "Spenser's Fairy Queen," and, thus feeling the charms of verse, became, as he himself tells us, "irrecoverably a poet." On his mother's solicitation he was admitted into Westminster-School, where he soon distinguished himself, and published a volume of Poems in his thirteenth year, containing, among other compositions, "The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe," written when he was ten years old; and Constantia and Philetus," written two years after.

While at school, he also produced a comedy called "Love's Riddle," though this was not published till he had been some time at Cambridge, to which place he was removed in 1636, and where he continued his studies with great intenseness; for he is said to have written, while a young student, the greater part of his "Davideis," a work which proves him to have possessed a mind of the greatest vigour and activity.

Two years after his settlement at Cambridge, he

published "Love's Riddle," with a poetical dedication to Sir Kenelm Digby, and also a Latin comedy, entitled "Naufragium Jocularé." This was printed with a dedication in verse to Dr. Comber, master of the college; but it did not add much to his reputation.

At the beginning of the civil war, as the Prince passed through Cambridge in his way to York, he was entertained with the representation of the "Guardian," a comedy, which Cowley says was neither written nor acted, but rough drawn by him, and repeated by the scholars. He had no opinion of it himself, although, during the suppression of the theatres, it was sometimes privately acted with sufficient approbation.

In 1643, being then Master of Arts, he was, by the prevalence of the parliament, ejected from Cambridge. He then entered himself at St. John's College, Oxford, where, it is said, he published a satire called "the Puritan and Papist," and distinguished himself equally by the warmth of his loyalty and the elegance of his conversation.

When Oxford was surrendered to the Parliament, he followed the Queen to Paris, where he became secretary to the Lord Jermin, afterwards Earl of St. Alban's, and where he was employed in cyphering and decyphering the letters that passed between the King and Queen, a situation certainly of the highest confidence and honour.

In the year 1647 his "Mistress" was published.

We do not find any thing worth relating during

his stay in Paris, from which place he was sent back into England in 1656, that (according to Sprat) under pretence of privacy and retirement he might take occasion of giving notice of the posture of things in this country.

Soon after his return to London he was seized by some messengers of the usurping powers, who had been sent out in quest of another man; and being examined he was put into confinement, from which he was not dismissed without the security of a thousand pounds, which was given by Dr. Scarborough.

This year he published his poems, and afterwards took upon himself the character of a physician, though with no intention, as is supposed, of ever attempting to practise. He now began to study botany, and retired into Kent to gather plants; but his inclination for poetry soon absorbed all other considerations, and he composed several Latin verses on the qualities of herbs and the beauties of flowers.

At the Restoration, after all his diligence and long service, he naturally expected ample preferments; but found his reward very tediously delayed, owing, as it was supposed, to a suspicion that his loyalty at one time experienced some relaxation. The neglect of the Court, however, was not his only mortification. Having newly fitted his old comedy of "the Guardian" for the stage, he brought it forward under the title of "the Cutter of Coleman-street," and it was badly received; which ill success he did not bear, as Dryden says,

“with so much firmness as might have been expected from so great a man.”

In consequence of the rejection of his play, and his not enjoying much of the confidence of the royal party, his vehement desire of retirement once more came upon him, and he settled at Chertsey in Surrey. His retreat was at first but slenderly accommodated, yet he soon obtained by the Earl of St. Alban's and the Duke of Buckingham such a lease of the Queen's lands as afforded him an ample income. He did not, however, long enjoy the pleasure of solitude, for he died at the Porch-house in Chertsey, in 1667, in the 49th year of his age, and was buried with great pomp near Chaucer and Spenser. King Charles is said to have pronounced, “that Mr. Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England.”

“In the general review of Cowley's poetry,” says Dr. Johnson, “it will be found that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unskilful selection; with much thought, but with little imagery; that he is never pathetic, and rarely sublime; but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

“It is said by Denham in his elegy,

“To him no author was unknown;

“Yet what he writ was all his own.”

“This wide position requires less limitation when it is affirmed of Cowley than perhaps of any other poet. He read much, and yet borrowed little.

“ His character of writing was indeed not his own : he unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He saw a certain way to present praise, and, not sufficiently inquiring by what means the ancients have continued to delight in all the changes of human manners, he contented himself with a deciduous ^{*} laurel, of which the verdure in its spring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually stealing from his brows.

“ He was in his own time considered as of unrivalled excellence. Clarendon represents him as having taken a flight beyond all that went before him ; and Milton is said to have declared, that the greatest English poets were “ Spenser, Shakespeare and Cowley.

“ His manner he had in common with others, but his sentiments were his own. Upon every subject he thought for himself ; and such was his copiousness of knowledge that something at once remote and applicable rushed into his mind ; yet it is not likely that he always rejected a commodious idea merely because another had used it : his known wealth was so great that he might have borrowed without loss of credit.”

Dr. Johnson gives it as his opinion that the last lines of Cowley's elegy on Sir Henry Wotton were copied from the noble epigram of Grotius upon the death of Scaliger, and that a particular passage from the poem of the “ Mistress ” is borrowed from Donne. He then proceeds thus :

^{*} Falling, not perennial.

“It is related by Clarendon that Cowley always acknowledged his obligation to the learning and industry of Jonson, but I have found no traces of Jonson in his works; to emulate Donne appears to have been his purpose, and from Donne he may have learned that familiarity with religious images, and that light allusion to sacred things, by which readers far short of sanctity are frequently offended, and which would not be borne in the present age, when devotion, perhaps not more fervent, is more delicate.

“His diction was, in his own time, censured as negligent. He seems not to have known, or not to have considered, that words being arbitrary must owe their power to association, and have the influence, and that only, which custom has given them. Language is the dress of thought; and as the noblest mien, or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employments of rustics or mechanics, so the most heroic sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by vulgar applications.

“He makes no selection of words, nor seeks any neatness of phrase. He has no elegancies either lucky or elaborate; as his endeavours were rather to impress sentences upon the understanding than images on the fancy, he has few epithets, and those scattered without peculiar propriety or nice adaptation. It seems to follow from the necessity of the

subject, rather than the care of the writer, that the diction of his heroic poem is less familiar than that of his slightest writings. He has given not the same numbers, but the same diction, to the gentle Anacreon and the tempestuous Pindar.

“ His versification seems to have had very little of his care ; and, if what he thinks be true, that his numbers are unmusical only when they are ill read, the art of reading them is, at present, lost ; for they are commonly harsh to modern ears. He has, indeed, many noble lines, such as the feeble care of Waller never could produce. The bulk of his thoughts sometimes swelled his verse to unexpected and inevitable grandeur ; but his excellence of this kind is merely fortuitous : he sinks willingly down to his general carelessness, and avoids with very little care either meanness or asperity.

“ His contractions are often rugged and harsh ;

One flings a mountain, and its river too
Torn up with't—

“ His rhymes are very often made by pronouns or particles, or the like unimportant words which disappoint the ear, and destroy the energy of the line.

“ His combination of different measures is sometimes dissonant and unpleasing ; he joins verses together of which the former does not slide easily into the latter.

“ The words *do* and *did*, which so much degrade in present estimation the line that admits them, were in the time of Cowley little censured

or avoided ; how often he used them, and with how bad an effect, at least to our ears, will appear by a passage in which every reader will lament to see just and noble thoughts defrauded of their praise by inelegance of language. ”

The acute Critic produces the passage alluded to, of which, however, it may be sufficient to say, that it consists of sixteen lines, and that the word *does* occurs no less than six times in the awkward manner on which the doctor has so justly bestowed censure.

“ His heroic lines, ” he goes on to say, “ are often formed of monosyllables, but yet they are sometimes sweet and sonorous.

“ He says of the Messiah,

Round the whole earth his dreaded name shall sound,
And reach to worlds that must not yet be found.

“ In another place, of David :

Yet bid him go securely when he sends ;
'Tis Saul that is his foe, and we his friends ;
The man who has his God no aid can lack,
And he who bid him go will bring him back. ”

The Critic remarks on Cowley's own account of his attempts *to paint in the number the nature of the thing which it describes*, and thus proceeds :

“ Cowley was, I believe, the first poet that mingled Alexandrines at pleasure with the common heroic of ten syllables, and from him Dryden borrowed the practice whether ornamental or licentious. He considered the verse of twelve syllables

as elevated and majestic, and has therefore deviated into that measure when he supposes the voice heard of the Supreme Being."

He then makes some observations on the poem of the "Davideis," and concludes his criticisms on Cowley as follows;

"After so much criticism on his Poems, the Essays which accompany them must not be forgotten. What is said by Sprat of his conversation, that no man could draw from it any suspicion of his excellence in poetry, may be applied to these compositions. No author ever kept his verse and his prose at a greater distance from each other. His thoughts are natural, and his style has a smooth and placid equability, which has never yet obtained its due commendation. Nothing is far sought, or hard laboured, but all is easy without feebleness, and familiar without grossness.

"It has been observed by Felton, in his "Essay on the Classics," that Cowley was beloved by every muse that he courted, and that he has rivalled the ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy.

"It may be affirmed, without any encomiastic fervour, that he brought to his poetic labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embellished with all the ornaments which books could supply; that he was the first who imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the less; that he was equally qualified for sprightly sallies and for lofty flights; that he was among those who freed translation from servility, and, instead of following his author at a

distance, walked by his side; and that if he left versification yet improveable, he left likewise, from time to time, such specimens of excellence as enabled succeeding poets to improve it."

WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER was born on the 3d of March, 1605, at Colshill, in Hertfordshire. His father was Robert Waller, Esq. of Agmondesham, in Buckinghamshire, whose family was originally a branch of the Kentish Wallers, and his mother was the daughter of John Hampden of Hampden in the same county, and sister to the celebrated Hampden.

His father died while he was an infant, but left him an "early" income of three thousand five hundred pounds which may be reckoned more than equivalent to ten thousand of the present time.

He was educated, by the care of his mother, at Eton, and removed afterwards to King's College in Cambridge. He was sent to parliament in his eighteenth, if not in his sixteenth year, and often frequented the court of James the First. His political and poetical life began nearly together. In his eighteenth year he wrote the poem that appears first in his works on "The Prince's Escape at St. Andero," a piece in which his versification was such as it appears in his last performances.

His next poem is supposed to be "The Address

to the Queen," written in his twentieth year, and we have no date of any other poetical production before that which the murder of the Duke of Buckingham occasioned.

Waller, although rich by inheritance, took care early to grow richer by marrying Mrs. Banks a great heiress in the City. Having brought him a son who died young, and a daughter who was afterwards married to Mr. Dormer of Oxfordshire, she died in child-bed, and left him a widower of about five and twenty.

Being too young to resist beauty, he found himself captivated by the Lady Dorothea Sydney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, whom he courted by all the poetry in which *Sacharissa* is celebrated. She, however, rejected his addresses, it is said, with disdain, and married in 1636 the Earl of Sunderland who died at Newberry in the King's cause. In her old age, meeting with Waller, she asked him when he would again write such verses upon her? "when you are as young, madam," said he, "and as handsome as you were then."

It is collected from the verses written at Penshurst that he diverted his disappointment by a voyage; but Johnson appears to think it more likely "that he amused himself with forming an imaginary scene, than that so important an incident, as a visit to America, should have been left floating in conjectural probability."

From his twenty-eighth to his thirty-fifth year he wrote his pieces on "the Reduction of Sallee;

on the Reparation of St. Paul's; to the King on his Navy; the Panegyric on the Queen Mother; the two Poems to the Earl of Northumberland; and, perhaps, others, of which the time cannot be discovered."

When he had lost all hopes of *Sacharissa*, he looked round him for an easier conquest, and gained a lady of the family of Bresse, or Breaux, by whom he had five sons and eight daughters.

At the time the parliament was called, in 1640, it appeared that his political character had not been mistaken, the courtiers imagining him hostile to them from his being considered as the kinsman of Hampden. The King's demand of a supply induced Waller to deliver a most vehement speech, the great position of which was that grievances ought to be redressed before supplies are granted.

In the long parliament which, unhappily for the nation, met Nov. 3, 1640, he represented Agmondesham the third time. Although a supporter of the discontented party, he did not, however, adopt all their opinions. When the great question, whether episcopacy ought to be abolished, was debated, he spoke against the innovation so coolly, so reasonably, and so firmly, that we are sorry our narrow limits will not permit us to insert the speech.

It cannot but be wished that he, who could speak so well, had been able to act with spirit and uniformity.

When the Commons began to set the royal authority at open defiance, Waller is said to have

withdrawn from the house, and to have returned with the King's permission; and when the King set up his standard, he sent him a thousand broad pieces. He continued, however, to sit in the rebellious conventicle, but spoke with great freedom against the sense and spirit of the house.

The engagement known by the name of Waller's plot was now discovered, when he, together with his brother-in-law Tomkyns, was apprehended. Waller, it is said, was so confounded with fear that he made a humiliating confession of all he knew of the business; accused the Earl of Portland, and Lord Conway as co-operating in the transaction; and testified, that the Earl of Northumberland had declared himself disposed in favour of any attempt that might check the violence of the parliament, and reconcile them to the King.

The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway denied the charge, and, no testimony but Waller's appearing against them, were, after a long imprisonment, admitted to bail. Tomkyns was hanged at his own door. The Earl of Northumberland being "too great for prosecution," as Johnson terms it, was only once examined before the lords.

"Waller, though confessedly," says Clarendon, "the most guilty, with incredible dissimulation affected such a remorse of conscience that his trial was put off, out of christian compassion, till he might recover his understanding." When brought before the house, he confessed and lamented, and submitted, and implored — He was, however,

expelled the Commons, and afterwards tried by a *council of war*, condemned, and reprieved by Essex; but after a year's imprisonment, in which time resentment grew less acrimonious, paying a fine of 10,000*l.* he was permitted *to recollect himself in another country.*

For the place of his exile he chose France, and staid some time at Rouen, where his daughter Margaret was born, who was afterwards his favourite and his amanuensis. He then removed to Paris, where he lived with great splendour and hospitality; and from time to time amused himself with poetry, in which he sometimes speaks of the rebels and their usurpation, in the natural language of an honest man.

At last it became necessary for his support to sell his wife's jewels; and being reduced, as he said, at last to the *rump-jewel*, he solicited, from Cromwell, permission to return, and obtained it by the interest of Colonel Scroop to whom his sister was married. Upon the remains of his fortune he lived at Hall Barn, a house built by himself very near to Beaconsfield where his mother resided. His mother, though related to Cromwell and Hampden, was zealous for the royal cause, and used to reproach Cromwell whenever he visited her; he in return would throw a napkin at her, and say *he would not dispute with his aunt*; but finding, in time, that she acted for the King as well as talked, he made her a prisoner to her own daughter in her own house.

Cromwell, now Protector, received Waller as

his kinsman to familiar conversation. Waller, as he used to relate, found him sufficiently versed in ancient history; and when any of his enthusiastic friends came to advise or consult him, he could sometimes overhear him discoursing in the cant of the times; but when he returned he would say, "Cousin Waller, I must talk to these men in their own way;" and renewed the common style of conversation.

He repaid the Protector for his favours (1654) by the famous Panegyric which has always been considered as the first of his poetical productions. In the poem on the war with Spain are some passages at least equal to the best parts of the Panegyric, and in the conclusion the poet ventures yet a higher flight of flattery by recommending royalty to Cromwell and the nation. Cromwell, although very desirous of adding the title to the power of monarchy, was still afraid of realizing his wishes. When, therefore, a deputation was solemnly sent to invite him to the crown, he, after a long conference, refused it; but he is said to have fainted in his coach when he parted from them.

The poem on the death of the Protector seems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Soon after, the Restoration supplied him with another subject; and he exerted his imagination, his elegance, and his melody, with equal alacrity for Charles the Second. It is not possible to read, without some contempt and indignation, poems of the same author ascribing the highest

degree of *power* and *piety* to Charles the First, then transferring the same *power* and *piety* to Oliver Cromwell; now inviting Oliver to take the crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his testimony as the effect of conviction, or receive his praises as effusions of reverence; they could consider them but as the labour of invention, and the tribute of dependance.

The Congratulation was considered as inferior, in poetical merit, to the Panegyric; and it is reported that, when the King told Waller of the disparity, he answered, "*Poets* succeed better in fiction than in truth."

In the first parliament summoned by Charles the Second (March 8, 1661) Waller sat for Hastings in Sussex, and served, for different places, in all the parliaments of that reign. His wit led him into the best company, and although he drank water he was enabled, by his fertility of mind, to brighten the mirth of Bacchanalian assemblies; and Mr. Saville said, that *no man in England should keep him company without drink but Ned Waller.*

"In parliament he was," says Burnet, "the delight of the house, and, though old, said the liveliest things of any among them." His abilities displayed rather sallies of gaiety than cogency of argument.

He was of such consideration that his remarks were circulated and recorded. When the Duke of York's influence was high, both in Scotland and England, "it drew," says Burnet, "a lively

reflection from Waller, the celebrated wit." He said, "the house of commons had resolved that the Duke should not reign after the King's death, but the King, in opposition to them, had resolved that he should reign even in his life."

In the year 1665 he asked from the King the Provostship of Eton College which was granted; but Clarendon refused to put the seal, alledging that it could be held only by a clergyman. To this opposition is imputed the violence and acrimony with which Waller joined Buckingham's faction in the prosecution of Clarendon. A year after the chancellor's banishment another vacancy gave him encouragement for another petition which the King referred to the council, who, after hearing the question argued by lawyers for three days, determined that the office could be held only by a clergyman, according to the act of conformity, since the provost had always received institution, as for a patronage, from the Bishops of Lincoln. The King then said he could not break the law which he had made.

At the accession of King James (in 1685) he was chosen for parliament, being then fourscore, at Saltash in Cornwall, and wrote "A presage of the downfall of the Turkish empire." It is remarked by his commentator Fenton, that, in reading Tasso, he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the holy war, and a zealous enmity to the Turks which never left him.

James treated him with kindness and familiarity. One day, taking him into the closet, the King asked

him how he liked one of the pictures. "My eyes," said Waller, "are dim, and I do not know it." The King said it was the Princess of Orange. "She is," said Waller, "like the greatest woman in the world." The King asked who that was, and being answered Queen Elizabeth, "I wonder," said the King, "you should think so; but I must confess she had a wise council." "And, Sir," said Waller, "did you ever know a fool chose a wise one?"

When the King knew that he was about to marry his daughter to Dr. Birch, a clergyman, he ordered a French gentleman to tell him "that the King wondered he could think of marrying his daughter to a falling church!" "The King," says Waller, "does me great honour in taking notice of my domestic affairs, but I have lived long enough to observe that this falling church has got a trick of rising again."

Whether he was privy to any of the transactions which ended in the Revolution is not known. His heir joined the Prince of Orange.

He now seemed to have turned his mind upon preparation for a future state, and therefore consecrated his poetry to devotion. The lines which he composed when *He, for age, could neither read nor write*, are not inferior to the effusions of his youth.

Towards the decline of life he bought a small house, with a little land, at Colshill, and said, "he should be glad to die like the stag, where he was roused." This, however, did not happen. When he was at Beaconsfield, he found his legs

grow tumid. He went to Windsor, where Sir Charles Scarborough then attended the King, and requested him, as both a friend and a physician, to tell him "what that swelling meant!" — "Sir," answered Scarborough, "your blood will run no longer." Waller repeated some lines of Virgil and went home to die. His decease happened on the 21st of October 1687, and he was interred at Beaconsfield.

"The characters," says Johnson, "by which Waller intended to distinguish his writings, are sprightliness and dignity; in his smaller pieces he endeavours to be gay, in the larger to be great. Of his airy and light productions the chief course is gallantry, that attentive reverence of female excellence which has descended to us from the Gothic age. As his poems are commonly occasional and his addresses personal, he was not so liberally supplied with grand as with soft images; for beauty is more easily found than magnanimity.

"The delicacy which he cultivated restrains him to a certain nicety and caution, even when he writes upon the slightest matter. He has therefore, in his whole volume, nothing burlesque, and seldom any thing ludicrous or familiar. He seems always to do his best, though his subjects are often unworthy of his care. His subjects were generally trifling, and his numbers not always musical. His thoughts are sometimes hyperbolical, and his images unnatural.

"His sallies of casual flattery are sometimes elegant and happy, as that "I return for the Silver

Pen;” and sometimes empty and trifling, as that “Upon the Card torn by the Queen.” There are a few lines “written in the Duchess’s Tasso,” which he is said by Fenton to have kept a summer under correction. Johnson gives it as his opinion, in opposition to that of Fenton, that *Waller appears not to have lost at eighty-two any part of his poetical powers.* After lamenting that verse, when applied to the purposes of worship, has not been hitherto attended with success, he again more particularly recurs to the poet who is the present subject of consideration.

“As much of Waller’s reputation was owing to the softness and smoothness of his numbers, it is proper to consider those minute particulars to which a versifier must attend.

“He certainly very much excelled in smoothness most of the writers who were living when his poetry commenced. The poets of Elizabeth had attained an art of modulation which was afterwards neglected or forgotten. Fairfax was acknowledged by him as his model; and he might have studied, with advantage, the poem of Davies¹, which, though merely philosophical, yet seldom leaves the ear ungratified.

“But he was rather smooth than strong; of *the full resounding line*, which Pope attributes to Dryden, he has given but very few examples. The critical decision has given the praise of

¹ Sir John Davies. The title of the poem here alluded to is “*Nosce teipsum.*”

strength to Denham, and of sweetness to Waller.

“ His excellence of versification has some abatements. He uses the expletive *do* very frequently; and, though he lived to see it almost universally ejected, was not more careful to avoid it in his last compositions than in his first. Praise had given him confidence; and finding the world satisfied, he satisfied himself.

“ His rhymes are, sometimes, weak words. *So* is found to make the rhyme twice in ten lines, and occurs often as a rhyme through his book.

“ His double rhymes in heroic verse have been censured by Mrs. Philips, who was his rival in the translation of Corneille's Pompey; and more faults might be found were not the inquiry below attention.

“ He sometimes uses the obsolete termination of verbs, as *waxeth*, *affecteth*; and sometimes retains the final syllable of the preterite, as *amazed*, *supposed*, of which I know not whether it is not to the detriment of our language that we have totally rejected them.

“ Of triplets he is sparing, but he did not wholly forbear them: of an Alexandrine he has given no example.

“ The general character of his poetry is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetic, and very rarely sublime. He seems neither to have had a mind much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are such as a liberal conversation and large acquaintance with life would easily supply. They had however,

then, perhaps, that grace of novelty which they are now often supposed to want by those who, having already found them in later books, do not know or inquire who produced them first. This treatment is unjust. Let not the original author lose by his imitators.

“ Praise, however, should be due before it is given. The author of Waller’s life ascribes to him the first practice of what Erythræus, and some late critics call *alliteration*, of using in the same verse many words beginning with the same letter. But this knack, whatever be its value, was so frequent among our early writers, that Gascoigne, a writer of the 16th century, warns the young poet against affecting it, and Shakespeare, in the “*Midsummer Night’s Dream*,” is supposed to ridicule it.

“ Waller borrows too many of his sentiments and illustrations from the old mythology, for which it is vain to plead the example of the ancient poets; the deities which they introduced so frequently were considered as realities so far as to be received by the imagination, whatever sober reason might even then determine. But of these images time has tarnished the splendour. A fiction not only detected, but despised, can never afford a solid basis to any position, though, sometimes, it may furnish a transient allusion or slight illustration. No modern monarch can be much exalted by hearing that as Hercules had his *club*, he has his *navy*.

“ But of the praise of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be

denied that he added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought; and to him may be applied what Tasso said, with equal spirit and justice, of himself and Guarini, when, having perused the "Pastor Fido," he cried out, "if he had not read Aminta, he had not excelled it."

MILTON.

JOHN MILTON was, by birth, a gentleman, being descended from the proprietors of Milton, near Thame, in Oxfordshire, one of whom forfeited his estate in the times of York and Lancaster.

His grandfather John was keeper of the forest of Shotover, a zealous papist, who disinherited his son because he had forsaken the religion of his ancestors.

His father John, who was the son disinherited, had recourse for his support to the profession of a scrivener. He was a man eminent for his skill in music, and his reputation in his profession was such that he grew rich and retired to an estate. He married a gentlewoman of the name of Caston, a Welch family, by whom he had two sons, John the poet, and Christopher who studied the law; and likewise a daughter, Anne.

John, the poet, was born in his father's house, at the Spread Eagle, in Bread Street, Dec. 9, 1608, between six and seven in the morning. His father had him instructed, at first, by private tuition, and

then sent him to St. Paul's school under the care of Mr. Gill. He was removed, in the beginning of his 16th year, to Christ College, Cambridge, where he entered a pensioner Feb. 12, 1624.

He was, at this time, eminently skilled in the Latin tongue; but the products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley.

At fifteen, a date which he uses till he is sixteen, he translated, or versified, two psalms, 114, and 136, and many of his elegies appear to have been written in his eighteenth year. Milton is said to be the first Englishman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verses with classic elegance.

He complains of the unkindness with which he was treated in the university. It is said that he was the last student, in either university, that suffered the public indignity of corporal correction; and 'tis certain, for what reason we know not, that he incurred *rustication*, a temporary dismission into the country, with, perhaps, the loss of a term.

Weary, as he declares, of enduring *the threats of a rigorous master, and something else which a temper like his could not undergo*, after taking both the usual degrees, that of Bachelor in 1628, and that of Master in 1632, he left the University with no kindness for its institution. He first went there with a design of entering into the church, but in time altered his mind, in consequence of thinking he could not, with a safe conscience, subscribe to some of the articles.

When he left the University, he returned to his father, then residing at Horton in Buckinghamshire, with whom he lived five years, in which time he is said to have read all the Greek and Latin writers. About this period he wrote "the Masque of Comus," which was presented at Ludlow, then the residence of the Lord President of Wales, in 1634, and had the honour of being acted by the Earl of Bridgewater's sons and daughter. His next production was "Lycidas," an elegy, written in 1637; and soon after, it is supposed, he wrote his "Arcadia."

In 1638, his mother just dead, he left England, and went first to Paris. From thence he hasted to Italy, and staid two months at Florence, where he was much noticed. At Rome, as at Florence, he staid only two months, a time too short for the contemplation of learning, policy or manners. From Rome he passed on to Naples; but instead of extending his travels, as he intended, he resolved to hasten home, hearing of the differences between the king and parliament, and being informed of plots laid against him by the Jesuits for the liberty of his conversation on religion. He came back to Rome, and staid there two months more, and afterwards went to Florence without molestation.

From Florence he visited Lucca, Venice, and Geneva, and came home through France, after an absence of a year and three months.

He first hired a lodging at the house of one Russel, a taylor, in St. Bride's Church Yard, and undertook the education of John and Edmund

Phillips, his sister's sons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a garden-house in Aldersgate Street. Here he received more boys to be boarded and instructed; for, his allowance from his father not being ample, he thus supplied his deficiencies by an honest and useful employment; and it is said that in the art of education he performed wonders.

He now began to engage in the controversies of the times. In 1641 he published a treatise on reformation, in two books, against the established church, and also another respecting episcopacy. His next work was "The Reason of Church-Government urged against Prelacy, by Mr. John Milton, 1642. He published the same year two more pamphlets upon the same question."

His father, after Reading was taken by Essex, came to reside in his house, and his school increased. At Whitsuntide, in his thirty-fifth year, he married Mary, the daughter of Mr. Powell, a justice of the peace in Oxfordshire. He brought her to town with him, where, however, she did not remain above a month before she requested to return to her friends, which was granted upon a promise of her coming back at Michaelmas. This, however, when the time came, she had no inclination to do, and after some vain attempts to make her comply Milton soon determined to repudiate her for disobedience. The lady and her relations now found that he was not an unresisting sufferer of injuries, and therefore resolved to endeavour a re-union, which was first effected in the

house of one Blackborough, his relation, in the lane of St. Martin - le - Grand, where at one of his usual visits he was surprised to see his wife come from another room, and implore forgiveness on her knees. He resisted her intreaties for a while; but by the intercession of friends, on both sides, a reconciliation soon took place. It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father and her brothers in his own house when they were distressed, with other royalists.

He published about the same time his "Areopagitica, a speech of Mr. John Milton for the liberty of unlicensed printing;" and not long after, in the year 1645, a collection of his Latin and English poems appeared, in which the "Allegro and Penseroso," with some others, were published.

He had taken a large house in Barbican for the reception of scholars; but finding there was no great increase to his number, about the time the army was new modelled (1645) he removed to a smaller one in Holborn, which opened backward into Lincoln's Inn-Fields. He is not known to have published any thing afterwards till the king's death, when, finding his murderers condemned by the presbyterians, he wrote a treatise to justify it. He made "Some Remarks on the Articles of Peace between Ormond and the Irish Rebels," and was suspected of having interpolated the book called *Icon Basilikè*, which the council of state, to whom he was now made Latin secretary, employed him to censure, by inserting a prayer taken from "Sidney's Arcadia," and imputing it to the king.

Dr. Birch was inclined to think that the regicides were the forgers of it.

Charles II being now sheltered in Holland employed Salmasius, professor of polite learning at Leyden, to write a defence of his father and of monarchy, and Milton was required to pen a sufficient answer, which he performed (1651) in such a manner that Hobbes declared himself unable to decide whose language was best, or whose arguments were worst. Milton, when he undertook this answer, was weak of body, and dim of sight; but his will was forward, and what was wanted in health was supplied by zeal. He was rewarded with a thousand pounds, and his book was much read. This success is said to have shortened Salmasius's life, for he died at Spa, September 3, 1653.

Milton had now been blind for some time, but his vigour of intellect was such that he was still able to discharge his office. After continuing his controversies for some time he at last gave himself up to his private studies and his civil employment.

Being now forty-seven years old, and seeing himself disencumbered from external interruption, he planned three great works for his future employment—an Epic Poem, the History of his Country, and a Dictionary of the Latin tongue. The latter was left in a very imperfect state at his death, and the history stopped at the Conquest.

For the subject of his epic poem, after much deliberation, *long chusing and beginning late*, he fixed upon "Paradise Lost." It seems, by some

sketches of poetical projects left in manuscript, and to be seen at a library at Cambridge, that he had digested his thoughts on this subject in some of those wild dramas which were anciently called mysteries; and Philips has seen what he terms part of a tragedy beginning with the first ten lines of Satan's address to the Sun. They were, however, very imperfect rudiments of "Paradise Lost."

While his greater designs were advancing, he amused himself as well as he could with little productions. He sent to the press (1658) a manuscript of Raleigh called "the Cabinet Council;" and next year gratified his malevolence to the clergy by a "Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases, and the Means of removing Hirelings out of the Church."

Oliver Cromwell was now dead; Richard, his son, was constrained to resign, and Milton saw himself and his cause in equal danger. The king was evidently approaching with the irresistible approbation of the people. Milton was therefore no longer secretary, and was consequently obliged to quit the house which he held by his office, and thought it convenient to seek some shelter by hiding himself for a time in Bartholomew Close, by West Smithfield.

The king promised to admit into an act of oblivion all, except those whom the parliament would object to; and the parliament doomed none to capital punishment but those who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the king. Milton was certainly not one of them; he had only

justified what they had done. The publication of the Act of Oblivion put him in the same condition with his fellow-subjects.

He removed to Jewin-street, near Aldersgate-street, and being blind, and by no means wealthy, he wanted a domestic companion and attendant; and therefore, by the recommendation of Dr. Paget, married Elizabeth Minshul, of a gentleman's family in Cheshire, probably without a fortune.

From this time he devoted himself entirely to poetry and literature, and after publishing the year following (1661) "Accidence commenced Grammar" for the use of Children, although he was then writing "Paradise Lost," he took a house in the *Artillery-walk*, leading to *Bunhill-fields*, the mention of which concludes the register of Milton's removals and habitation.

He was now busied by "Paradise Lost," which it is supposed was reduced to its present form about the time (1655) when he finished his dispute with the defenders of the king. He long before had promised to adorn his native country by some great performance; but while he was obliged to divide his time between his private studies and affairs of state, his poetical labour must have been often interrupted.

Being driven from all public stations, he was confessedly and visibly employed upon his poem.—He was obliged, when he had composed as many lines as his memory would conveniently retain, to employ some friend in writing them. This gave opportunity to observations and reports.

Philips, who went from time to time to visit him and had the perusal of the poem as it went on, asked the reason, as the summer came on, of his not being shewn any for a considerable time—Milton declared “that his vein never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal.”

Richardson relates, “that he would sometimes be awake whole nights, but not a verse could he make; and on a sudden his poetical faculty would rush upon him with an *impetus* or *æstrum*, and his daughter was immediately called to secure what came. At other times he would dictate perhaps forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number”—“That Milton called for his daughter (says Johnson) *to secure what came*, may be questioned, for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write.”

Milton has told us that he composed much of his poem in the night and morning, and that he poured out with great fluency his *unpremeditated verse*. At what particular times of his life the several parts of his work were written cannot now be known. The beginning of the third book shews that he had lost his sight; and the introduction to the seventh, that the return of the king had clouded him with discountenance, and that he was offended by the licentious festivity of the Restoration. There are no other internal notes of time.

When the plague (1665) raged in London he took refuge at Chalfont, in Essex, where Elwood,

who had taken the house for him, first saw a complete copy of "Paradise Lost," and, having perused it, said to him, "Thou hast said a great deal upon 'Paradise Lost'— what hast thou to say upon *Paradise Found*?"

Next year, when the danger of infection had ceased, he returned to Bunhill-fields, and designed the publication of his poem. A license was granted, though objections were made to particular passages, and among them, to the simile of the sun eclipsed in the first book. He sold his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons for an immediate payment of five pounds, with a stipulation to receive five pounds more when 1300 should be sold of the first edition; and again five pounds after the sale of the same number of the second edition, and another five pounds after the same sale of the third. None of the three editions were to be extended beyond fifteen hundred copies.

The first edition was of ten books in a small quarto. The titles were varied from year to year; and an advertisement and the arguments of the books were omitted in some copies, and inserted in others.

The sale gave him in two years a right to his second payment, for which the receipt was signed April 26, 1669. The second edition was not given till 1674; it was printed in small octavo, and the number of books was increased to twelve by a division of the seventh and tenth; and some other small improvements were made. The third edition was published in 1678; and the widow, to whom

the copy was then to devolve, sold all her claims to Simmons for eight pounds according to her receipt given Dec. 21, 1680. Simmons had already agreed to transfer the whole right to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds, and Aylmer sold to Jacob Tonson half, August 17, 1683, and half March 24, 1690, at a price considerably enlarged.

The slow sale and tardy reputation of this poem have been always mentioned as evidences of neglected merit; but Dr. Johnson appears to think, considering the state of literature of that time, reading not being then a general amusement as it is at present, that the sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius.

Three years after his "Paradise Lost" (1670) he published his "History of England," comprising the whole fable of Geoffry of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman invasion. The same year were printed "Paradise Regained," and "Samson Agonistes," a tragedy written in imitation of the ancients, and never designed by the author for the stage.

When Milton shewed "Paradise Regained" to Elwood, "This," said he, "is owing to you, for you put it in my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which otherwise I had not thought of."

His last poetical offspring was his favourite. He could not, as Elwood relates, endure to hear "Paradise Lost" preferred to "Paradise Regained."

He now composed a book of logic for the

initiation of students in philosophy, and published (1672) “*Artis logicæ plenior institutio ad Petri Rami methodum concinnata* : that is, A new Scheme of Logic according to the Method of Ramus.” He also published “A Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the Best Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.”

In the last years of his life he reprinted his juvenile poems, and sent to the press a collection of familiar epistles in Latin. When he had attained his 66th year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature, and he died, by a quiet and silent expiration, about the 10th of November 1674 at his house in Bunhill-fields, and was buried next his father in the chancel of St. Giles’s at Cripplegate, his funeral being very splendidly and numerously attended. A monument has been erected in Westminster Abbey “to the author of *Paradise Lost*,” by Mr. Benson.

“Milton has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful so as to have been called the *lady* of his college. His hair, which was of light brown, parted at the fore-top, and hung down upon his shoulders according to the picture which he has given of Adam. He was, however, not of the heroic stature, but rather below the middle size, according to Mr. Richardson, who mentions him as having narrowly escaped from being *short* and *thick*. He was vigorous and active, and delighted in the exercise of the sword in which he is related to have been eminently skilful. His

weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the back-sword, of which he recommends the use in his book on Education.

“His eyes are said never to have been bright; but if he was a dextrous fencer, they must have been once quick.

“His literature was unquestionably great. He read all the languages which are considered either as learned or polite, Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. In *Latin* his skill was such as places him in the first rank of writers and critics; and he appears to have cultivated Italian with uncommon diligence. The books in which his daughter, who used to read to him, represented him as most delighting, after Homer which he could almost repeat, were “Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*,” and “Euripides.”

“Of the English poets he set most value upon Spenser, Shakespeare, and Cowley. Spenser was apparently his favourite. Shakespeare he may easily be supposed to like with every other skilful reader; but I should not have expected that Cowley, whose ideas of excellence were so different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who sometimes visited him, was, that he was a good rhymist, but no poet.”

Of his juvenile performances Dr. Johnson places the “*Masque of Comus*” as the first in merit. Our limits will not permit us to insert his criticisms on the whole of the productions of the poet before us. We shall therefore come immediately to what

he says of Milton's grand work, "Paradise Lost"—and even here, the great extent, to which his minute investigation of this poem leads him, necessarily confines us to a few of the most striking and important passages, such as we think will suffice to give the reader a just insight into the general opinion which the critic entertains of the production in the aggregate.

"With respect to design (says he), it may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second among the productions of the human mind.

"The characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace, but his natural port is gigantic loftiness. He can please when pleasure is required, but it is his peculiar power to astonish.

"He seems to be well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others—the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful. He therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said, on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance.

"The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not satiate his appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are requires a minute attention, and employs the memory more than the fancy. Milton's delight was to sport in the wide

regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the councils of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven.

“ But he could not always be in other worlds: he must sometimes revisit earth, and tell of things visible and known. When he cannot raise wonder by the sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.

“ Whatever be his subject, he never fails to fill the imagination. But his images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of nature do not seem to be always copied from original forms, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, *through the spectacles of books*, and on most occasions calls learning to his assistance. The garden of Eden brings to his mind the vale of *Enna* where Proserpine was gathering flowers. Satan makes his way through fighting elements like *Argo* between the *Cyanean* rocks, or *Ulysses* between the two *Sicilian* whirlpools when he shunned *Charybdis* on the larboard. The mythological allusions have been justly censured as not being always used with notice of their vanity, but they contribute variety to the narration, and produce an alternate exercise of the memory and the fancy.

“ His similes are less numerous, and more various than those of his predecessors: but he does

not confine himself within the limits of rigorous comparison. His great excellence is amplitude, and he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimensions which the occasion required. Thus, comparing the shield of Satan to the orb of the moon, he crowds the imagination with the discovery of the telescope, and all the wonders which the telescope discovers.

“Whatever be done, however, the poet is always great. Our progenitors, in their first state, conversed with angels; even when folly and sin had degraded them, they had not in their humiliation *the port of mean suitors*; and they rise again to reverential regard when we find that their prayers were heard.

“As human passions did not enter the world before the fall, there is in the “Paradise Lost” little opportunity for the pathetic, but what little there is has not been lost. That passion which is peculiar to rational nature, the anguish arising from the consciousness of transgression, and the horrors attending the sense of the divine displeasure, are very justly described, and forcibly impressed. But the passions are moved only on one occasion. Sublimity is the general and prevailing quality in this poem; sublimity variously modified, sometimes descriptive, sometimes argumentative.

“The defects and faults “of Paradise Lost,” for faults and defects every work of man must have, it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As in displaying the excellence of Milton I have not made long quotations, because of

selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manner mention that which seems to deserve censure ; for what Englishman can take delight in transcribing passages, which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honour of our country ?

“ The plan of “ Paradise Lost ” has this inconvenience, that it comprises neither human actions, nor human manners. The man and woman, who act and suffer, are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no transaction in which he can be engaged ; beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself ; he has, therefore, little natural curiosity or sympathy. ”

In the Poem itself there is a full display of the united force of study and genius ; of a great accumulation of materials with judgment to digest, and fancy to combine them : Milton was able to select from nature, or from story, from ancient fable, or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study, and sublimed by imagination.

“ It has been therefore said, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiasts, that in reading “ Paradise Lost ” we read a book of universal knowledge.

“ But original deficiency cannot be supplied. The want of human interest is always felt. “ Paradise Lost ” is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again.

Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harrassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation ; we desert our master, and seek for companions."

Another inconvenience of Milton's design is, *that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits, and proves, in a variety of instances, that the confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity.*

"Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell ; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death should have shewn the way to hell might have been allowed ; but they cannot facilitate the passage by building a bridge, because the difficulty of Satan's passage is described as real and sensible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative. The hell assigned to the rebellious spirits is described as not less local than the residence of man. It is placed in some distant part of space separated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotic waste and an unoccupied vacuity ; but *Sin and Death* worked up a *mole of aggregated soil*, cemented with *asphaltus*, a work too bulky for ideal architects.

"This unskilful Allegory appears to me one of the greatest faults of the poem ; and to this there was no temptation but the author's opinion of its beauty."

After pointing out some objections to the conduct of the narrative, the critic closes his examination of "Paradise Lost" in these words:

"Such are the faults of that wonderful performance "Paradise Lost," which he who can put in balance with its beauties must be considered not as nice but as dull, as less to be censured for want of candour than pitied for want of sensibility."

Of "Paradise Regained, and "Samson Agonistes"—the first has been too much depreciated, the latter too much admired.

"The highest praise of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be said to have contrived the structure of an epic poem, and therefore must yield to that vigour and amplitude of mind to which all generations must be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incident, the interposition of dialogue, and all the stratagems that surprise and enchain attention. But of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the least indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help or hindrance: he did not refuse admission to the thoughts or images of his predecessors, but he did not seek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received support; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favours gained; no exchange of praise, nor solicitation of support. His great works were performed under discountenance, and in

blindness; but difficulties vanished at his touch: he was born for whatever is arduous, and his work is not the greatest of heroic poems only because it is not the first."

BUTLER.

THE only accounts we have of the great author of Hudibras are all of disputable authority.

Samuel Butler was born in the parish of Strensham in Worcestershire, according to one account in 1600; according to another in 1612. The accounts are so very doubtful respecting him that it is not certain whether he went to Cambridge or Oxford.

He was for some time, if we credit the author of his life, clerk to Mr. Jefferys of Earl's Croomb in Worcestershire, an eminent justice of the peace. In his service he had not only leisure for study, but for recreation: his amusements were music and painting; and the reward of his pencil was the friendship of the celebrated Cooper.

He was afterwards admitted into the family of the Countess of Kent, where he had the use of a library; and so much recommended himself to Selden, steward to the Countess, that he was often employed by him in literary business. How long he continued in it, and why he left it, are, like the other incidents of his life, utterly unknown.

The vicissitudes of his condition placed him

afterwards in the family of Sir Samuel Luke, one of Cromwell's officers, and he is said to have written or begun his poem at this time.

When the king returned, Butler was made Secretary to the Earl of Carbury, President of the Principality of Wales, who conferred on him the stewardship of Ludlow Castle when the court of the marches was revived.

In 1663 was published the first part, containing three cantos, of the poem of Hudibras, which, as Prior relates, was made known at court by the taste and influence of the Earl of Dorset. When it was known, it was necessarily admired by all, and by no one more than by the king.

In 1664, says Dr. Johnson ¹, the second part appeared, and the writer was again praised. But praise was his whole reward. Places and employments of value and credit were promised him, but no such advantages did he ever obtain.

One thing is generally allowed, that however well Butler had deserved of the royal family by writing his inimitable Hudibras, he was at last suffered to languish in obscurity in the greatest distress. Notwithstanding, however, the discouragement and neglect he met with, he published in 1678 the third part, which still leaves the poem imperfect

¹ This must be a mistake : for in the "Mercurius Publicus" for Nov. 20, 1663, is this very singular advertisement : "Newly published, the Second Part of Hudibras, by the Author of the Former, which (if possible) has outdone the First. Sold by John Mertin and James Allestry, at the Bell, St. Paul's Church Yard. EDITOR.

and abrupt. It cannot be thought strange that he should stop here however unexpectedly, for to write is sufficiently unpleasing, and if his birth be placed right by Mr. Longueville, he had now arrived at an age when he might well think it proper to be in jest no longer.

He died in 1680, and Mr. Longueville buried him at his own cost in the church-yard of Covent Garden. About sixty years afterwards, Mr. Barber, a printer and Lord Mayor of London, bestowed on him a monument in Westminster Abbey.

After his death were published three small volumes of his posthumous works, and two volumes more have been printed by Mr. Thier of Manchester, indubitably genuine.

“The poem of Hudibras (says Dr. Johnson) is one of those compositions of which a nation may justly boast as the images which it exhibits are domestic, the sentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the strain of diction original and peculiar. We must not, however, suffer the pride which we assume as the countrymen of Butler to make any encroachment upon justice, nor appropriate those honours which others have a right to share. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly English; the original idea is to be found in the history of Don Quixote, a book to which a mind of the greatest power may be indebted without disgrace.” “But,” adds the critic,

“If inexhaustible wit could give perpetual pleasure, no eye would ever leave half-read the work of Butler; for what poet has ever brought so many

remote images so happily together! It is scarcely possible to peruse a page without finding some association of images that was never found before. By the first paragraph the reader is amused, by the next he is delighted, and by a few more strained to astonishment; but astonishment is a toilsome pleasure: he is soon weary of wondering, and longs to be diverted.

“Imagination is useless without knowledge: nature gives in vain the power of combination unless study and observation supply materials to be combined. Butler’s treasures of knowledge appear proportioned to his expence: whatever topic employs his mind, he shews himself qualified to expand and illustrate it with all the accessories that books can furnish: he is found not only to have travelled the beaten road, but the bye walks of literature; not only to have taken the general survey, but to have examined particulars with minute inspection.

“If the French boast the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting him with Butler.

“Hudibras was not a hasty effusion; *to accumulate such a mass of sentiments at the call of accidental desire or of sudden necessity, is beyond the reach and power of the most active and comprehensive mind.* The manners of Hudibras, however, being founded on opinions, are temporary and local, and therefore become every day less intelligible and less striking.”

“The diction of this poem,” says the great

critic, "is grossly familiar, and the numbers purposely neglected, except in a few places where the thoughts by their native excellence secure themselves from violation, being such as mean language cannot express. The mode of versification has been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the heroic measure was not rather chosen. To the critical sentence of Dryden the highest reverence would be due were not his decisions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. When he wished to change the measure, he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that when the numbers were heroic the diction should still remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural composition. If he preferred a general stateliness both of sound and words, he can be only understood to wish that Butler had undertaken a different work."

DRYDEN.

NOTHING can be known of this great poet beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied. John Dryden was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwincle near Oundle; his father was Erasmus Dryden of Tichmarsh, who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, baronet, of Canons Ashby.

From Westminster school, where he was instructed as one of the king's scholars by Dr. Busby,

he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge.

Of his school performances there has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Hastings; and at the University he does not appear to have been eager of poetical distinction. He obtained, whatever was the reason, no fellowship in the college.

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a public candidate for fame, by publishing *Heroic Stanzas on the Late Lord Protector*, which, compared with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion, were sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

Dryden, like the other panegyrists of usurpation, changed his opinion, or his profession, when the king was restored, and published "*ASTREA REDUX*," a poem on the happy restoration and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second.

According to the best information that can be obtained, in the thirty-second year of his life (1663) he commenced a writer for the stage. His first piece was a comedy called the "*Wild Gallant*;" but it was so much disapproved that he was compelled to recal it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears. In 1664 he published the "*Rival Ladies*," which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery. In this play he made his essay of dramatic rhyme. He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the "*Indian Queen*," a tragedy in rhyme. The "*Indian Emperor*" was published in 1667, and is also written in rhyme, intended for a sequel to Howard's "*Indian Queen*."

In this play is the description of night which *Rymer* has made famous by preferring it to those of all other poets.

In 1667 he published "*Annus Mirabilis*," the *year of wonders*, which seems to be one of his most elaborate works. It is written in *quatrains*, or heroic stanzas of four lines. His "*Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry*" appeared in 1668, in which year he succeeded Sir William Davenant as Poet Laureat. "*Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen*," a tragic-comedy, "*Sir Martin Marall*," a comedy, and "*The Tempest*," an alteration, in conjunction with Davenant, of Shakespeare's play, made their appearance successively.

About the year 1673, after severely attacking a successful play by *Elkanah Settle* ¹, appeared the "*Mock Astrologer*," a comedy, "*Tyrannic Love, or the Virgin Martyr*," a tragedy in rhyme, and the two parts of the "*Conquest of Grenada*." Then came "*Marriage A-la-mode*," The "*Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery*," comedies, and "*Amboyna*." The remainder in the following order: "*Troilus and Cressida*," altered from Shakespeare, the "*Spanish Fryar*," a tragic-comedy, The "*Duke of Guise*," a tragedy written in conjunction with Lee, together with "*Ædipus*," "*Albion and Albanus*," a musical drama, The "*State of Innocence and Fall of Man*," called by the author an opera, but by Johnson a *tragedy in heroic rhyme*, "*Aureng Zebe*," a tragedy in rhyme, and which appears to

¹ The Empress of Morocco, a tragedy.

be the most elaborate of all his dramas, "All for Love, or the World well Lost," a tragedy. This play is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or character. "Limberham, or the Kind Keeper," a comedy, which after the third night was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. "Don Sebastian," esteemed either the first or second of his dramatic performances. It was first acted in 1690 after Dryden had for some years discontinued writing for the stage. "Amphitryon," a comedy, and "Cleomenes," a tragedy. It is related in the "Guardian," that as Dryden came out from the representation of the last play, he was accosted thus by some airy stripling: *Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan.* That, Sir, said Dryden, *perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you that you are no hero.* After "King Arthur," an opera, appeared "Love Triumphant," a tragi-comedy, in 1694, his last drama.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being asked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three; *not, said he, young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.*

Though his own opinion was, that his genius was not dramatic, he had a great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged, by contract, to furnish four plays in a year.

In the year 1671, Buckingham characterised him by the name of Bayes in the *Rehearsal*, and the Earl of Rochester, to suppress his reputation, took Settle into his protection. However, neither critics nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless it was that they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment give reason to suspect. The perpetual accusation produced against him was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any vigorous defence.

During the space of time he produced such a number of plays, it may be supposed he was sufficiently employed; but notwithstanding he found room for many other undertakings. He contributed something to many publications, and in 1680, the *Epistles of Ovid* being translated by the poets of the time, Dryden materially assisted the work.

The following year he became yet more conspicuous by uniting politics with poetry in the memorable satire called "*Absalom and Achitophel*," written against the faction which, by Lord Shaftesbury's incitement, set the Duke of Monmouth at its head. Johnson says, that the sale of this poem was so large, that his father, an old bookseller, told him, he had not known it equalled but by *Sacheverel's* trial. — The "*Model*" came out in the same year.

Soon after the accession of King James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours,

Dryden declared himself a convert to popery. The priests, having strengthened their cause by so powerful an adherent, employed him to translate "Maimbourg's History of the League," which he published with a large introduction. His name is likewise prefixed to the English life of Francis Xavier, and he is supposed to have undertaken to translate "Varillas's History of Heresies."

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological controversy, he was desirous of bringing poetry to aid his arguments, and he published the "Hind and Panther," a poem in which the church of Rome, figured by the *milk-white hind*, defends her tenets against the church of England, represented by the *Panther*, a beast beautiful, but spotted. This fable was ridiculed by Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

When the Revolution took place, Dryden, a papist, could of course be no longer laureat, and Shadwell, an old enemy, was appointed to succeed him. He celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem, exquisitely satirical, called "Mac Fleckno," of which the *Dunciad*, as Pope himself declares, is an imitation — Prior relates, that Lord Dorset gave him an allowance equal to the salary.

Being now no longer the court poet, he was compelled to look back for support to his former trade, that of writing for the stage, and it was at this time (1690) he produced "Don Sebastian." In 1693 appeared a new version of Juvenal and Persius. Of Juvenal he translated the first, third,

sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires; and of Persius the whole work. The 14th of Juvenal was the performance of John, and the seventh of Charles, sons of Dryden—He prefixed a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to Lord Dorset, and there gives an account of the design which he had once formed to write an epic poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. This plan he charged Blackmore with stealing.

In 1694 he began the most laborious and difficult of all his works, the translation of “Virgil;” from which he borrowed two months that he might turn “Fresnoy’s Art of Painting” into English prose—The preface, which he boasts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting with a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks, such as cost a mind like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697 he published his version of the works of “Virgil;” and in 1699 his last work, his Fables, made its appearance in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract which obliged him, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses. In this volume is comprised the well-known Ode on St. Cecilia’s day.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his schemes and labours. On the 1st of May 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple, he died in Gerrard-street of a mortification in his limbs. He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where he lay long without distinction till the Duke of Buckinghamshire gave him

a tablet inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

“ There are men whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation; whom merriment confuses, and objection disconcerts; whose bashfulness restrains their exertions, and suffers them not to speak till the time of speaking is past, or whose attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been considered and cannot be recalled.

“ Of Dryden’s sluggishness in conversation it is in vain to search or to guess the cause. He certainly wanted neither sentiments, nor language; his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. *His thoughts, when he wrote, flowed upon him so fast that his only care was which to chuse, and which to reject.* Such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk, yet we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself. But, whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. It is related, by Carte, of the Duke of Ormond, that he used often to pass a night with Dryden and those with whom Dryden consorted: who they were Carte has not told, but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond sat was not surrounded with a plebeian society. He was indeed reproached with boasting of his familiarity with the great; and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiors is not the lowest kind of merit.”

“Dryden may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely missed, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

“Dryden’s “*Essay on Dramatic Poetry*” was the first regular treatise on the art of writing. He who, having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge, or much novelty of instruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few who had gathered them partly from the ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of dramatic poems was not then generally understood. Audiences applauded by instinct, and poets perhaps often pleased by chance.”

“The *Dialogue of the Drama* was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the public was abated, partly by custom, and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with

illustrations. His portraits of the English Dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakespeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastic criticism, exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration — The praise lavished by Longinus on the attestation of the heroes of Marathon by Demosthenes fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the Editors and Admirers of Shakespeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value though of greater bulk."

"As to his learning (says Johnson), it will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. Having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in Grammar-Schools, and resided afterwards at Cambridge, it is not to be supposed that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common students, but his scholastic acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illustrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten track of regular study, from which if ever he departs he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions.

“ Criticism, either didactic or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he had devoted to his patrons ; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled ; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid ; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous ; what is little, is gay ; what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently, but while he forces himself upon our esteem we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Every thing is excused by the play of images and the sprightliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble ; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh ; and though, since his earlier works, more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

“ He who writes much will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same* ; he does not exhibit a second time the same elegancies in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously ; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features cannot be ridiculed by any over-charged resemblance.”

“ The Ode for St. Cecilia’s day, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden’s works that excellence must be found. Compared with the Ode on *Killigrew* it may be pronounced perhaps superior in the whole, but without any single part equal to the first stanza of the other.

“ It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight’s labour; but it does not want its negligences; some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

“ His last stanza has less emotion than the former, but is not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vitious: the music of Timotheus, which *raised a Monarch to the skies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of *Cecilia*, which *drew an Angel down*, had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.”

“ In the general survey of Dryden’s labours, he appears to have had a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

“ The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented he studied rather than felt, and produced

sentiments not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted, and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.

“He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic, and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure; and for the first part of his life he looked on *Otway* with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his play *there was nature, which is the chief beauty.*

“We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart, than a servile submission to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with false magnificence. It was necessary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curiosity; by reviving former thoughts or impressing new : sentences were readier at his call than images; he could more easily fill the ear with some splendid novelty than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart.

“The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination, and, that argument might not be too soon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessity, destiny and contingency; these he discusses in the language of the schools with so much

profundity that the terms which he uses are seldom understood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

“ When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side : he was now no longer at a loss ; he had always argument at command ; *verbaque provisam rem*—gave him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

“ In Comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifices and surprises ; from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate, he seems to have had not from nature, but from other poets ; if not always as a plagiarist, at least as an imitator.

“ Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and eccentric violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle ; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy. This inclination sometimes produced nonsense, which he knew.”

“ These are his faults of affectation ; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together without something of which

the reader is ashamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach, and when he could content others was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind an idea of pure perfection, nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself, but, while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

“He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient, he did not stop to make better, and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he dismissed from his thoughts; and, I believe, there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after the publication. The hastiness of his productions might be the effect of necessity; but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any other cause than impatience of study.

“What can be said of his versification will be little more than a dilatation of the praise given it by Pope:

“Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join	}
“The varying verse, the full-resounding line,	
“The long majestic march, and energy divine.	

“ Some improvements had been already made in English numbers, but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verse that was smooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had sometimes a finished line, he had it by chance : Dryden knew how to chuse the flowing and the sonorous words, to vary the pauses, and adjust the accents, to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of his metre.”

“ Of Dryden’s works it was said by Pope, that *he could select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply.* Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we are taught *sapere et fari*, to think naturally and express forcibly. He taught us that it was possible to reason in rhyme. He shewed us the true bounds of a translator’s liberty. What was said of Rome adorned by Augustus may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden : *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*; he found it brick, and he left it marble.

DENHAM

WAS born at Dublin in 1615, the only son of Sir John Denham, of Little Horsely in Essex, then chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garrat Moore, of Mellefont.

Two years afterwards his father, being made one of the Barons of the Exchequer in England, brought him away from his native country, and educated him in London.

In 1631 he was sent to Oxford, where he was considered "as a dreaming young man, given more to dice and cards than study," and therefore gave no prognostics of his future eminence.

When he was, three years afterwards, removed to Lincoln's Inn, he prosecuted the common law with sufficient appearance of application, yet did not lose his propensity to cards and dice, and was very often plundered by gamesters. He resolved at length to desist from the practice, and published "An Essay upon Gaming." In 1636 he translated the Second Book of the *Æneid*. Two years after, his father died, and then, notwithstanding his resolutions, he returned again to the vice of gaming, and lost several thousand pounds that had been left him.

In 1641 he published "The Sophy," which seems to have given him his first hold of the public attention; and afterwards being pricked for Sheriff of Surry, and made Governor of Farnham Castle

for the King, which he soon resigned, he retreated to Oxford, where, in 1643, he published "Cooper's Hill."

"In 1647, the distresses of the royal family required him to engage in more dangerous employments. He was intrusted by the Queen with a message to the King; and, by whatever means, so far softened the ferocity of Hugh Peters, that by his intercession admission was procured. Of the King's condescension he has given an account in the dedication of his works.

He was afterwards employed in carrying on the King's correspondence; but, being accidentally discovered, he made his escape.

He was yet engaged in a greater undertaking. In April 1648 he conveyed James the Duke of York from London into France, and delivered him there to the Queen and Prince of Wales. This year he published his translation of "Cato Major."

He now resided in France as one of the followers of the exiled King; at which time he wrote several pieces of poetry. At the Restoration he obtained, what many missed, the reward of his loyalty, being made surveyor of the King's buildings, and dignified with the order of the Bath.

After the Restoration he wrote the "Poem on Prudence and Justice," and perhaps some of his other pieces—He failed, however, in the attempt to make "A metrical Version of the Psalms of David."

It might be hoped that the favour of his King

and the esteem of the public would now make him happy. But human felicity is short and uncertain. A second marriage brought upon him so much disquiet as for a time disordered his understanding. But his frenzy lasted not long, and he seems to have regained his full force of mind; for he wrote afterwards his excellent Poem upon the Death of Cowley, whom he was not long to survive, for on the 19th of March 1668 he was buried by his side.

“Denham is deservedly considered as one of the fathers of English poetry.” “Denham and Waller (says Prior) improved our versification, and Dryden perfected it.” “He has given specimens of various compositions, descriptive, ludicrous, didactic, and sublime.”

“His “Poem on the Death of Cowley” was his last, and, among his shorter works, his best performance: the numbers are musical, and the thoughts are just.

“Cooper’s Hill” is the work that confers upon him the rank and dignity of an original author. He seems to have been, at least among us, the author of a species of composition that may be denominated local poetry, of which the fundamental subject is some particular landscape to be poetically described with the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical retrospection or incidental meditation.

“To trace a new scheme of poetry has in itself a very high claim to praise, and its praise is yet more when it is apparently copied by Garth and

Pope, after whose names little will be gained by an enumeration of smaller poets that have left scarce a corner of the Island undignified by rhyme or blank verse.

“Cooper’s Hill,” if it be maliciously inspected, will not be found without its faults. The digressions are too long, the morality too pregnant, and the sentiments sometimes such as will not bear a rigorous inquiry.”

“He is one of the writers that improved our taste, and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.”

ROCHESTER.

JOHN WILMOT, afterwards Earl of Rochester, the son of Henry Earl of Rochester, better known by the title of Lord Wilmot, was born in April, 1648, at Ditchley in Oxfordshire. After a grammatical education at the school of Burford, he entered a nobleman into Wadham college in 1659, only eleven years old; and in 1661, at thirteen, was, with some other persons of high rank, made master of arts by Lord Clarendon in person.

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy, and, at his return, devoted himself to a court. In 1665 he distinguished himself at sea by uncommon intrepidity, and the next summer served again on

board Sir Edward Spragge, who in the heat of the engagement, having a message of reproof to send to one of his captains, could find no man ready to carry it but Wilmot, who in an open boat went and returned amidst the storm of shot.

But his reputation for bravery was not lasting: he was reproached with slinking away in street quarrels, and leaving his companions to shift as they could without him; and Sheffield Duke of Buckingham has left a story of his refusal to fight him.

When he became a courtier he unhappily addicted himself to dissolute and vicious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He lost all sense of religious restraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was resolved not to obey, sheltered his wickedness behind infidelity.

He was so much in favour with King Charles that he was made one of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, and Comptroller of Woodstock Park. He is mentioned, by Wood, as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in English, Cowley.

At the early age of one and thirty, in consequence of dissolute and abandoned habits, he had exhausted the fund of life, and reduced himself to a state of weakness and decay.

He died July 26, 1680, before he had completed his thirty-third year.

“ Lord Rochester was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many

wild pranks, and sallies of extravagance. The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings ; the compositions of a man whose name was heard so often were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applause. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguished, and his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed.

“ As he cannot be supposed to have found leisure for any course of continued study, his pieces are commonly short, such as one fit of resolution would produce.

“ His songs have no particular character : they tell, like other songs, in smooth and easy language, of scorn and kindness, dismissal and desertion, absence and inconstancy, with the common places of artificial courtship. They are commonly smooth and easy, but have little nature, and little sentiment.

“ His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second began that adaptation, which has since been very frequent, of ancient poetry to present times, and perhaps few will be found where the parallelism is better preserved than in this. The versification is indeed sometimes careless, but is sometimes vigorous and weighty. The strongest effort of his muse is his poem upon “ Nothing.”

“ In all his works there is sprightliness and vigour, and every where may be found tokens of a mind which study might have carried to excellence ; and what more can be expected from

a life spent in ostentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men begin to be displayed! ¹”

OTWAY.

LITTLE is known of this great but unfortunate writer.

He was born at Trotton in Sussex, March 3, 1651, the son of Mr. Humphry Otway, rector of Woolbeding. From Winchester school he was entered in 1669 a Commoner of Christ Church, but left the University without a degree; whether for want of money, or from impatience of academical restraint, or mere eagerness to mingle with the world, is not known.

On his arrival in London he commenced player; but, finding himself unable to gain any reputation on the stage, he thought he possessed such powers as might qualify him for a dramatic author. In 1675, his twenty-fifth year, he produced “Alciades, a Tragedy.” In 1677 he published “Titus and Berenice,” translated from Racine with the “Cheats of Scapin” from Moliere; and in 1678 “Friendship in Fashion,” a comedy which, whatever

¹ Some Letters of Lord Rochester to his wife (which place his character in a new point of view, and which were never before published) appeared in the European Magazine for October 1796, p. 233 *et seq.*

might be its first reception, was, upon its revival at Drury Lane in 1749, hissed off the stage for immorality and obscenity.

Otway, it is said, was about this time a favourite of the dissolute wits who in general did no more for him than pay his reckoning. Men of wit, says one of Otway's biographers, received at that period no favour from the great but to share their riots, *from which they were dismissed again to their own narrow circumstances. Thus they languished in poverty without the support of eminence.*

Some exception, however, must be made. The Earl of Plymouth, one of King Charles's natural sons, procured for Otway a cornet's commission in some troops then sent into Flanders. But he did not prosper in his military character; for, whatever was the reason, he came back to London in extreme indigence.

In 1675 "Don Carlos" was played, and it is said with great success. "The Orphan" was exhibited in 1680, and in the same year he produced the "History of Caius Marius," much of which is borrowed from the "Romeo and Juliet" of Shakespeare.

In 1683 was published the first, and, the next year, the second part of "The Soldier's Fortune," two comedies now forgotten; and in 1685 his last and greatest dramatic work, "Venice Preserved," a tragedy which still continues to be one of the favourites of the public. Together with these plays he wrote several poems, and translated from the French the "History of the Triumvirate."

“ All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old, for he died April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled by his necessities to contract debts, and hunted, as is supposed, by the terriers of the law, he retired to a public house on Tower Hill, where he died of want, or, as it is related by one of his biographers, by swallowing, after a long fast, a piece of bread which charity had supplied. He went out, as it is reported, almost naked, in the rage of hunger, and, finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-house, asked him for a shilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea, and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the first mouthful. All this I hope is not true; but that indigence and its concomitants, sorrow and despondency, brought him to the grave, has never been denied.”

Otway had not much cultivated versification, nor much replenished his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving the passions, to which Dryden in his latter years left an illustrious testimony. He appears, by some of his verses, to have been a zealous royalist, and had what was in those times the common reward of loyalty: he lived and died neglected.”

GARTH.

SAMUEL GARTH was of a good family in Yorkshire, and from some school in his own country became a student at Peterhouse in Cambridge, where he resided till he commenced Doctor of Physic on July 7, 1691. He was admitted fellow of the College at London July 26, 1692, and was soon so much distinguished by his conversation and accomplishments as to obtain very extensive practice.

He is always mentioned as a man of benevolence, which was fully proved by his great zeal in forwarding the undertaking of the *Dispensary*, which occasioned him to write his poem of that name. In 1697 he spoke that which is now called the Harveian Oration, and in October 1702 became one of the censors of the college.

Garth, being an active and zealous Whig, was a member of the Kit-cat Club, and consequently known to all the great men of that denomination. In 1710, when the government fell into other hands, he wrote to Lord Godolphin a short poem on his dismissal.

At the accession of the present family his merits were acknowledged and rewarded. He was knighted with the sword of his hero, Marlborough, and was made physician in ordinary to the King, and physician general to the army.

He then undertook an edition of "Ovid's Metamorphoses," translated by several hands which

he recommended by a preface. This was his last work. He died January 18, 1717-18, and was buried at Harrow on the Hill.

“ His poetry has been praised at least equally to its merit. In the “*Dispensary*” there is a strain of smooth and free versification, but few lines are eminently elegant. No passages fall below mediocrity, and few rise much above it. The plan seems formed without just proportion to the subject; the means and end have no necessary connexion. Mesnel, in his “*Preface to Pope’s Essay*,” remarks, that Garth exhibits no discrimination of characters; and that what any one says might with equal propriety have been said by another. The general design is open to criticism, but the composition can seldom be charged with inaccuracy or negligence. The author never slumbers in self-indulgence; his full vigour is always exerted; scarce a line is left unfinished, nor is it easy to find an expression used by constraint, or a thought imperfectly expressed. It was remarked by Pope, that the “*Dispensary*” had been corrected in every edition, and that every change was an improvement. It appears, however, to want something of general delectation; and therefore, since it has been no longer supported by accidental and extrinsic popularity, it has been scarcely able to support itself.”

JOHN PHILIPS.

JOHN PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December 1676 at Bampton in Oxfordshire, of which place his father, Dr. Stephen Philips, Archdeacon of Salop, was minister. The first part of his education was domestic, after which he was sent to Winchester, where he soon distinguished himself by the superiority of his exercises, and endeared himself to his school-fellows by his civility and good nature. It is said that he seldom mingled with them in play, but retired to his chamber, where he used to sit hour after hour, while his hair was combed by somebody whose service he found means to procure.

At school he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

In 1694 he entered himself at Christ Church, where he was distinguished as a genius eminent among the eminent. The profession which he intended to follow was that of physic; and he took much delight in natural history, of which botany was his favourite part.

In 1703 he published the "Splendid Shilling," which struck the public attention with a mode of writing new and unexpected. "Blenheim" appeared in 1705. The next year produced his greatest work, the poem upon "Cider," in two books, which was received with loud praises. He then began to meditate a poem on the "Last Day," but did

not live to finish it. A slow consumption and an asthma put an end to his existence on the 15th of February 1708, at the beginning of his thirty-third year. He was buried in the cathedral of Hereford, and Simon Harcourt, afterwards Lord Chancellor, gave him a monument in Westminster Abbey.

“His works are few. The “*Splendid Shilling*” has the uncommon merit of an original design, unless it may be thought precluded by the ancient Centos. To degrade the sounding words and stately construction of Milton, by an application to the lowest and most trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which held its captives in admiration; the words and things are presented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.”

The poem of “*Blenheim*” Johnson seems to consider only as a *tolerable* production. On that entitled “*Cider*” he criticises thus—

“To the poem of “*Cider*,” written in imitation of the “*Georgics*,” may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of science. This I was told by Miller, the great gardener and botanist, whose expression was, *that there were many books, written on the same subject in prose, which do not contain so much as that poem.*

“In the disposition of his matter, so as to interperse precepts relating to the culture of trees, with

sentiments more generally pleasing, and in easy and graceful transitions from one subject to another, he has very diligently imitated his master; but he unhappily pleased himself with blank verse, and supposed that the numbers of Milton, which impress the mind with veneration, combined as they are with subjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be sustained by images which at most can rise only to elegance. Contending angels may shake the regions of heaven in blank verse, but the flow of equal measures, and the embellishment of rhyme, must recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redstreak* and *pearmain*.

“What study could confer Philips had attained, but natural deficiency cannot be supplied. He seems not born to greatness and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often surprise with unexpected excellence; but perhaps to his last poem may be applied what Tully said of the work of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius*.”

POMFRET.

OF Mr. John Pomfret nothing is known, but from a slight and confused account prefixed to his poems by a nameless friend, who relates that he was the son of the Rev. Mr. Pomfret, Rector of Luton in Bedfordshire; that he was bred at

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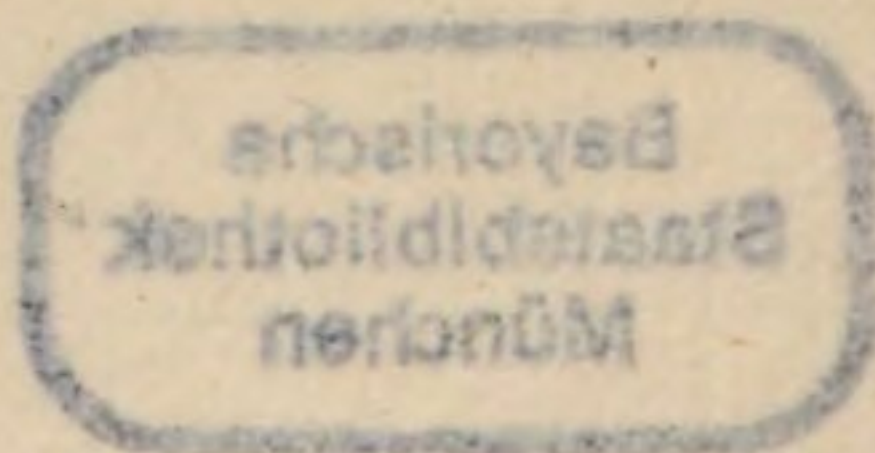
Cambridge, entered into orders, and was Rector of Malden in Bedfordshire. A malicious interpretation of some passages in his "Choice," inferring that he considered happiness as more likely to be found in the company of a mistress than of a wife, prevented him from rising higher in the church.

Notwithstanding this opinion, he married; but waiting in London in the expectation of some preferment, he caught the small pox, and died in 1703 in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

"He published his poems in 1699; and has been always the favourite of that class of readers, who, without vanity or criticism, seek only their own amusement.

"His "Choice" exhibits a system of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations; such a state as affords plenty and tranquillity without exclusion of intellectual pleasures. Perhaps no composition in our language has been oftener perused than Pomfret's "Choice."

"In his other poems there is an easy volubility; the pleasure of smooth metre is afforded to the ear, and the mind is not oppressed with ponderous, or entangled with intricate sentiment. He pleases many, and he who pleases many must have merit."



ADDISON.

JOSEPH ADDISON was born on the 1st of May, 1672, at Milston, of which his father, Lancelot Addison, was then Rector, near Ambresbury in Wiltshire

In 1683, in his twelfth year, his father being made Dean of Litchfield, carried his family to his new residence, and his son a short time after contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which their joint labours have so effectually recorded.

In 1687 he was entered of Queen's College in Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental perusal of some Latin verses gained him the patronage of Dr. Lancaster, afterwards Provost of Queen's College, by whose recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a Demy, a term by which that society denominates those which are elsewhere called Scholars; young men who partake of the founder's benefaction, and succeed in their order to vacant fellowships. He took the degree of M. A. February 14, 1693. Here he continued to cultivate poetry and criticism, and grew first eminent by his Latin compositions. He collected a second volume of the "*Musæ Anglicanæ*," in which all his Latin pieces are inserted, and where his poem on the Peace has the first place. He afterwards presented the collection to Boileau, who from that time conceived, says Tickell, *an opinion of the English genius for poetry.*

In his 22d year he first shewed his power of

English poetry by some verses addressed to Dryden; and soon afterwards published a translation of the greater part of the fourth Georgic upon Bees; after which, says Dryden, *my latter swarm is hardly worth the hiving*. About the same time he composed the arguments prefixed to the several books of "Dryden's Virgil;" and produced "an Essay on the Georgics." His next paper of Verses contained a character of the principal English poets.

About this period he was introduced by Congreve to Montague, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, by whose influence he was diverted from his original design of entering into holy orders.

Soon after (1695) he wrote a poem to King William, addressed to Lord Somers. In 1697 he wrote his poem "On the Peace of Ryswick," which he dedicated to Montague, and which was afterwards called by Smith *the best Latin poem since the Æneid*.

Having yet no public employment, he obtained (in 1699) a pension of three hundred pounds a year that he might be enabled to travel. He staid a year at Blois, probably to learn the French language, and then proceeded in his journey to Italy. While he was travelling, he not only collected his observations on the country, but found time to write his "Dialogues on Medals," and four acts of "Cato." Such is the relation of Tickell. He also wrote in Italy the Letter to Lord Halifax, which is justly considered as the most elegant, if

not the most sublime, of his poetical productions. But in about two years he found it necessary to hasten home, being, as Swift informs us, distressed by indigence, and compelled to become the Tutor of a travelling Squire.

At his return he published his *Travels*, with a dedication to Lord Somers—This book, though a while neglected, became in time so much the favourite of the public that before it was reprinted it rose to five times its price. When he came back to England (in 1702), the meanness of his appearance gave testimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced abroad. His old patrons being out of power, he remained neglected untill the victory at Blenheim (1704) gave him an opportunity to exercise his poetical genius, which he did at the request of Lord Godolphin, and having advanced in the poem no further than the simile of the Angel, he was immediately rewarded by succeeding Mr. Locke in the place of *Commissioner of Appeals*.

In the following year he was at Hanover with Lord Halifax; and the year after was made Under Secretary of State, first to Sir Charles Hedges, and in a few months more to the Earl of Sunderland. About this time the prevalent taste for Italian Operas inclined him to try what would be the effect of a Musical Drama in our own language. He therefore wrote the “Opera of Rosamond,” which, when exhibited on the stage, was either hissed or neglected—Steele confessed that he owed to him several of the most successful scenes in his comedy

of the "Tender Husband." To this play Addison supplied a prologue.

When the Marquis of Wharton was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Addison attended him as his Secretary; and was made Keeper of the Records in Birmingham's Tower with a salary of three hundred pounds a year. The office was little more than nominal, and the salary was augmented for his accommodation.

When he was in office, he made a law to himself, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends. "For (said he) I may have a hundred friends, and if my fee be two guineas, I shall, by relinquishing my right, lose two hundred guineas, and no friend gain more than two: there is therefore no proportion between the good imparted, and the evil suffered."

He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his design, began the publication of the "Tatler;" but he was not long concealed: by inserting a remark on Virgil which Addison had given him, he discovered himself. His first Tatler was published April 22 (1709), and Addison's contribution appeared May 26. To the "Tatler" in about two months succeeded the "Spectator," a series of Essays of the same kind, but written with less levity upon a more regular plan, and published daily. It is said by Addison, in a subsequent performance, that these two works had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolicsome and the gay to unite merriment with decency; an effect which

they can never wholly lose while they continue to be among the first books by which both sexes are initiated in the elegancies of knowledge.

The next year (1713) in which " Cato " came upon the stage, was the grand climacteric of Addison's reputation. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned as a satire on the Tories, and the Tories echoed every clap to shew that the satire was unfelt. The play, supported thus by the emulation of factious praise, was acted night after night for a longer time than it is thought the public had allowed to any drama before; and the Author, as Mrs. Porter related, wandered through the whole exhibition behind the scenes with restless and unappeasable solicitude.

While " Cato " was upon the stage, another daily paper, called the " Guardian," was published by Steele. To this Addison gave great assistance, whether occasionally, or by previous engagement, is not known. The papers of Addison are marked in the " Spectator " by one of the letters in the name of *Clio*, and in the " Guardian " by a hand. It was not supposed that he had tried a Comedy on the stage till Steele, after his death, declared him the Author of the " Drummer. " This however he did not know to be true by any cogent testimony; for, when Addison put the play into his hands, he only told him it was the work of a *Gentleman in the Company*—The total silence of any other claimant has determined the public to

assign it to Addison, and it is now printed with his other poetry. Steele carried it to the play-house, afterwards to the press, and sold the copy for fifty guineas. It was received on the stage with cold approbation.

He was not all this time an indifferent spectator of public affairs. He wrote, as different exigencies required in 1707, "The present state of the War, and the necessity of an Augmentation." He published also the few papers entitled "The Whig Examiner;" and it must be admitted that on no occasion was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his wit more evidently appear. His "Trial of Count Tarif," written to expose the treaty of Commerce with France, lived longer than the question that produced it.

Not long afterwards an attempt was made to revive the "Spectator," and eighty numbers only appeared—These were collected into an eighth volume, perhaps more valuable than any one of those that went before it—Addison produced more than a fourth part. The "Spectator" from its recommencement was published only three times a week. To Addison Tickell has ascribed twenty-three papers.

When the House of Hanover took possession of the throne, it was reasonable to expect that the zeal of Addison would be adequately rewarded. Before the arrival of King George he was made Secretary to the Regency, and was required by his office to send notice to Hanover that the Queen was dead,

and that the throne was vacant. He was so overwhelmed with the greatness of the event, and so distracted by choice of expression, that the Lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticism, called Mr. Southwell, a Clerk in the House, and ordered him to dispatch the message. Southwell readily told what was necessary, in the common style of business, and valued himself upon having done what was too hard for Addison.

He was better qualified for the "Freeholder," a paper which he published twice a week, from December 23, 1715, to the middle of the next year.

August 2, 1716, he married the Countess Dowager of Warwick, whom he had solicited by a very long courtship—He is said to have first known her by becoming Tutor to her son—The marriage, it is said, made no addition to his happiness. She always remembered her own rank, and thought herself entitled to treat with very little ceremony her Son's Preceptor. Rowe's ballad of the "Despairing Shepherd" is said to have been written, either before or after marriage, upon this memorable pair.

The year after (1717) he rose to his highest elevation, being made Secretary of State—He was however unequal to the duties of his office. In the House of Commons he could not speak, and therefore was useless to the defence of the Government. In the office, says Pope, he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. Feeling by experience his own

inability, he was at last forced to solicit his dismissal with a pension of 1500l. a year. It was given out by his friends that this relinquishment was in consequence of declining health.

He now began to plan literary occupations for his future life. He purposed a tragedy on the death of Socrates; but he engaged in a nobler work, "A Defence of the Christian Religion," of which part was published after his death; and he designed to have made a new poetical version of the Psalms. It is related, that he had once a design to make an English Dictionary, and that he considered Dr. Tillotson as the writer of highest authority.

Addison however did not conclude his life in peaceful studies; but relapsed, when he was near his end, to a political question. It so happened that (1718, 19) a controversy was agitated with great vehemence between him and Steele, two friends of long continuance. The subject of their dispute was of great importance. The Earl of Sunderland proposed an act called the "Peerage Bill," by which the number of Peers should be fixed, and the King restrained from any new creation of Nobility unless when an old family should be extinct—The bill was naturally opposed in the Commons, who were not likely to approve the perpetual exclusion of themselves and their posterity. Steele became their advocate, and published a pamphlet called the "Plebeian." To this an answer appeared by Addison under the title of the "Old Whig." Some personal invectives passed between

them in the dispute, that caused these illustrious friends finally to part in acrimonious opposition.

The end of Addison's useful life was now approaching—He had for some time been oppressed by shortness of breath which was now aggravated by a dropsy—During this lingering decay, he sent, as Pope relates, a message by the Earl of Warwick to Mr. Gay, desiring to see him : Gay, who had not visited him for some time before, obeyed the summons, and found himself received with great kindness. Addison told him that he had injured him, but that, if he recovered, he would recompense him. What the injury was, he did not explain, nor did Gay ever know ; but supposed that some preferment designed for him had by Addison's intervention been withheld.

When he found his life near its end, he directed Lord Warwick, a young man of very irregular life, to be called ; and when he desired with great tenderness to hear his last injunctions, told him, *I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die.* What effect this awful scene had on the Earl is not known ; he died himself in a short time. Having given directions to Mr. Tickell for the publication of his works, and dedicated them on his death-bed to his friend Mr. Craggs, he died June 17, 1719, at Holland-House, leaving an only child, a daughter.

“ Of the virtue of Addison it is sufficient testimony that the resentment of party has transmitted no charge of any crime. He was not one of those who are praised only after death ; for his merit

was so generally acknowledged, that Swift, having observed that his election passed without a contest, adds, that if he had proposed himself for King he could hardly have been refused."

"Of his habits or external manners nothing is so often mentioned as that timorous or sullen taciturnity which his friends called modesty by too mild a name. Steele mentions with great tenderness that remarkable bashfulness which is a cloak that hides and muffles merit; and tells us, that his abilities were covered only by modesty, which doubles the beauties which are seen, and gives credit and esteem to all that are concealed — Chesterfield affirms, that Addison was the most timorous and awkward man that he ever saw. And Addison, speaking of his own deficiency in conversation, used to say of himself, that, with respect to intellectual wealth, he could draw bills for a thousand pounds, though he had not a guinea in his pocket."

"The time in which he lived had reason to lament his obstinacy of silence; for he was, says Steele, above all men in that talent called humour, and enjoyed it in such perfection, that I have often reflected, after a night spent with him apart from all the world, that I had the pleasure of conversing with an intimate acquaintance of Terence and Catullus, who had all their wit and nature heightened with humour more exquisite and delightful than any other man ever possessed. This is the fondness of a friend; let us hear what is told us by a rival. Addison's conversation, says Pope, had something

in it more charming than I have found in any other man. But this was only when familiar; before strangers, or perhaps a single stranger, he preserved his dignity by a stiff silence."

"His own powers were such as might have satisfied him with conscious excellence. Of very extensive learning he has indeed given us no proofs. He seems to have had small acquaintance with the sciences, and to have read little except Latin and French; but of Latin poets his "Dialogues on Medals" shew that he had perused the works with great diligence and skill. The abundance of his own mind left him little need of adventitious sentiments; his wit always could suggest what the occasion demanded. He had read with critical eyes the important volume of human life, and knew the heart of man from the depths of stratagem to the surface of affectation.

"What he knew, he could easily communicate. This, says Steele, was particular in this writer, that when he had taken his resolution, or made his plan for what he designed to write, he would walk about a room, and dictate it into language with as much freedom and ease as any one could write it down, and attend to the coherence and grammar of what he dictated."

"As a writer," says Dr. Johnson, "his poetry is first to be considered, of which it must be confessed that it has not often those felicities of diction which give lustre to sentiments, or that vigor of sentiment that animates diction: there is little of ardour, vehemence or transport; there

is very rarely the awfulness of grandeur, and not very often the splendour of elegance. He thinks justly, but he thinks faintly. This is his general character to which doubtless many single passages will furnish exceptions.

“ Yet if he seldom reaches supreme excellence, he rarely sinks into dullness, and is still more rarely entangled in absurdity. He did not trust his powers enough to be negligent. There is in most of his compositions a coolness and equability, deliberate and cautious, sometimes with little that delights, but seldom with any thing that offends.”

“ The letter from Italy has been always praised, but has never been praised beyond its merit. It is more correct with less appearance of labour, and more elegant with less ambition of ornament, than any other of his poems. There is however one broken metaphor of which notice may properly be taken,

Fir'd with that name —

I bridle in my struggling muse with pain,

That longs to launch into a nobler strain.

“ To *bridle* a *Goddess* is no very delicate idea; but why must she be *bridled*? because she *longs* to *launch*; an act which was never hindered by a *bridle*; and whither will she *launch*? into a *nobler strain*. She is in the first line a *horse*, in the second a *boat*; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horse* or his *boat* from *singing*.

“ The next composition is the far-famed “*Campaign*,” which Dr. Warton has termed a “*Gazette in Rhyme* with a harshness not often used by the

good nature of his criticism." Before a censure so severe is admitted, let us consider that war is a frequent subject of poetry, and then inquire who has described it with more justness and force. Many of our own writers tried their powers upon this year of victory, yet Addison's is confessedly the best performance; his poem is the work of a man not blinded by the dust of learning: his images are not borrowed merely from books. The superiority which he confers upon his hero is not personal prowess and *mighty bone*, but deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his passions, and the power of consulting his own mind in the midst of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly.

"It may be observed that the last line is imitated by Pope:

Marlb'rough's exploits appear divinely bright—
Rais'd of themselves their genuine charms they boast,
And those that paint them truest praise them most.

"This Pope had in his thoughts; but, not knowing how to use what was not his own, he spoiled the thought when he had borrowed it:

The well-sung woes shall sooth my pensive ghost;
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.

"Martial exploits may be *painted*; perhaps *woes* may be *painted*; but they are surely not *painted* by being *well sung*: it is not easy to paint in song, or to sing in colours.

"No passage in the "Campaign" has been more

often mentioned than the simile of the Angel, which is said in the "Tatler" to be *one of the noblest thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man.*"

Johnson then goes on to prove that it is not a simile, but merely an exemplification. He concludes what he says of this poem by giving what Dr. Madden once repeated to him—

If I had set, said he, ten schoolboys to write on the battle of Blenheim, and eight had brought me the Angel, I should not have been surprised.

After placing the "Opera of Rosamond" among the first of Addison's compositions, he comes to the Tragedy of Cato, "which he says

"——— is unquestionably the noblest production of Addison's genius. Of a work so much read it is difficult to say any thing new. About things on which the public think long, it commonly attains to think right; and of "Cato" it has not been unjustly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama; rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. Nothing here *excites or assuages emotion; here is no magical power of raising phantastic terror or wild anxiety.* The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care; we consider not what they are doing, or what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. Cato is a being above our solicitude; a man of whom the Gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with

heedless confidence. To the rest neither Gods nor men can have much attention, for there is not one amongst them that strongly attracts either affection or esteem ; but they are made the vehicles of such sentiments and such expression, that there is scarcely a scene in the play which the reader does not wish to impress upon his memory.

“ When “ Cato ” was shewn to Pope, he advised the Author to print it without any theatrical exhibition, supposing it would be read more favourably than heard. Addison declared himself of the same opinion, but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the stage. The emulation of parties made it successful beyond expectation, and its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffected elegance, and chill philanthropy.”

Of Addison as a translator Johnson says—“ His translations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of a scholar. That he understood his authors cannot be doubted ; but his versions will not teach others to understand them, being too licentiously paraphrastical. They are however, for the most part, smooth and easy ; and, what is the first excellence of a translator, such as may be read with pleasure by those who do not know the original.”

“ In general his poetry is polished and pure ; the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not sufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has sometimes a striking line, or a shining paragraph ; but on the whole he is warm rather than

fervid, and shews more dexterity than strength. He was however one of our earliest examples of correctness.

“The versification, which he learned from Dryden, he debased rather than refined. His rhymes are often dissonant; in his Georgics he admits broken lines. He uses both triplets and alexandrines, but triplets more frequently in his translations than his other works. The mere structure of verses seems never to have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very smooth in “*Rosamond*”, and too smooth in “*Cato*.”

“His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not groveling, pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviated from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

“It seems to have been his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction; he is therefore something verbose in his transitions and connexions, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation; yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine anglicism. What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic; he is never rapid, and never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied

amplitude, nor affected brevity; his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

BLACKMORE.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE was the son of Robert Blackmore, of Corsham in Wiltshire, supposed to have been an Attorney. Having been for some time educated in a Country School, he was sent at thirteen to Westminster; and in 1668 was entered at Edmund-hall in Oxford, where he took the degree of M. A. June 3, 1676, and resided thirteen years; a much longer time than is usual to spend at the University. He afterwards travelled: at Padua, he was made Doctor of Physic; and having wandered about a year and a half on the Continent, returned home.

In some part of his life, though it is not known when, his indigence compelled him to teach a school, and afterwards, having studied Physic for some time, he commenced Physician, and obtained high eminence and extensive practice. He became Fellow of the College of Physicians April 12, 1687 — His residence was in Cheapside, and his friends were chiefly in the City. He was therefore made a poet not by necessity but inclination, and was not known as a maker of verses till he published

(in 1696) “ Prince Arthur,” an heroic poem in ten books, written, as he relates, *by such catches and starts, and in such occasional uncertain hours as his profession afforded, and for the greatest part in coffee-houses, or in passing up and down the streets.*

That this work found many readers is certain ; for in two years it had three editions, a very uncommon instance of favourable reception, at a time when literary curiosity was yet confined to particular classes of the nation. In 1697 it appeared in twelve books instead of ten. In the same year, he was made one of the Physicians in ordinary to King William, and advanced by him to the honour of Knighthood, with a present of a gold chain and a medal.

His ardour of poetry still continued, and in 1700 he published a “ Paraphrase on the Book of Job,” and other parts of the Scripture. The same year he gave to the world a “ Satire on Wit ;” a proclamation of defiance to his rivals, that united almost all the poets against him, and which brought upon him lampoons and ridicule from every side. In 1705 he published “ Eliza ” in ten books, another heroic poem.

From this period he turned some of his thoughts to the celebration of living characters ; he wrote a poem on the “ Kit-cat Club,” and Advice to the Poets how to celebrate the Duke of Marlborough.” Some considerable time after, the poem of “ Advice to a Weaver of Tapestry ” appeared, which Steele, in the Tatler, treats with the utmost contempt.

In 1712 he published “ Creation, a philosophical

Poem." Addison gives it the highest praise in the 339th Number of the Spectator. Dennis calls it "a Philosophical Poem, which has equaled that of Lucretius in the beauty of his versification, and infinitely surpassed it in the solidity and strength of his reasoning."

This poem, if he had not written any thing else, would have transmitted him to posterity among the first favourites of the English muse.

When the "Spectator" stopped, he considered the polite world as destitute of entertainment; and in concert with Mr. Hughes, who wrote every third paper, published three times a week the "Lay Monastery." This undertaking proceeded no further than to forty papers, which was afterwards collected into a volume, and called in the title a "Sequel to the Spectators."

Some years afterwards (1716 and 1717) he published two volumes of "Essays in Prose." In August 22, 1716, he became one of the *Elects* of the College of Physicians, and was soon after (October 1) chosen Censor.

He now began to think that his poem on "Creation" would be imperfect, unless he likewise enforced the truth of Revelation; and for that purpose added another poem on "Redemption." He had likewise written before his "Creation" three books on the "Nature of Man."

In 1721 he produced a "New Version of the Psalms of David fitted to the Tunes used in the Churches," which being recommended by the archbishops and many bishops, obtained a licence

for its admission into public worship ; but no admission has it yet obtained, nor has it any right to come where *Brady* and *Tate* have got possession.

He now again turned his mind to heroic poetry, and produced “ *Alfred* ” in 1733, an epic poem of twelve books. It did not however add much to his reputation, and is by this time quite forgotten. He wrote several treatises on physic, and also engaged himself in theological controversy ; but the books which he published on those subjects are now not much noticed. He died on the eighth of October 1729.

“ As a writer, ” Johnson says, “ Blackmore depended with great security on his own powers, and perhaps was for that reason less diligent in perusing books. His literature was, I think, but small. What he knew of antiquity I suspect him to have gathered from modern compilers : but, though he could not boast of much critical knowledge, his mind was stored with general principles, and he left minute researches to those whom he considered as little minds.

“ With this disposition he wrote most of his poems. Having formed a magnificent design, he was careless of particular and subordinate elegancies ; he studied no niceties of versification ; he waited for no felicities of fancy ; but caught his first thoughts in the first words in which they were presented : nor does it appear that he saw beyond his own performances, or had even elevated his mind to that ideal perfection which every genius born to excel is condemned always to

pursue, and never overtake. In the first suggestions of his imagination he acquiesced; he thought them good, and did not seek for better.

“ The poem on “ Creation ” has, however, the appearance of more circumspection; it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction: it has either been written with great care, or, what cannot be imagined of so long a work, with such felicity as made care less necessary.

“ Its two constituent parts are ratiocination and description. To reason in verse is said to be difficult; but Blackmore not only reasons in verse, but very often reasons poetically, and finds the art of uniting ornament with strength, and ease with closeness. This is a skill which Pope might have condescended to learn from him, when he needed it so much in his Moral Essays.

“ In his descriptions, both of life and nature, the poet and the philosopher happily co-operate; truth is recommended by elegance, and elegance sustained by truth.

“ In the structure and order of the poem not only the greater parts are properly consecutive, but the didactic and illustrative paragraphs are so happily mingled that labour is relieved by pleasure, and the attention is led on through a long succession of varied excellence to the original position, the fundamental principle of wisdom and virtue.”

R O W E.

NICHOLAS ROWE was born at Little Beckford in Bedfordshire in 1673. His family had long possessed a considerable estate with a good house at Lambertoun in Devonshire. His father John Rowe, who was the first that quitted his paternal acres to practise any art of profit, professed the law, and published "Barlow's and Dallison's Reports" in the reign of James the second. He was made Serjeant, and died April 30, 1692. He was buried in the Temple Church.

Nicholas was first sent to a private school at Highgate; and, being afterwards removed to Westminster, was at twelve years of age chosen one of the King's Scholars. His exercises in several languages are said to have been written with uncommon degrees of excellence, and yet to have cost him very little labour.

At sixteen he was entered a student of the Middle Temple; but from the age of nineteen, the time his father died, it is thought he suffered law gradually to give way to poetry. At twenty-five he produced the "Ambitious Stepmother," which was received with so much favour, that he devoted himself from that time wholly to the more elegant parts of writing.

His next tragedy (1702) was "Tamerlane," in which, under the name of Tamerlane, he intended to characterise King William, and Lewis the fourteenth under that of Bajazet. This was the tragedy which Rowe valued most.

The “Fair Penitent,” his next production (1703), is one of the most pleasing tragedies on the stage, where it still keeps its place, for there is scarcely any work of any poet at once so interesting by the fable and so delightful by the language.

“The story is domestic, and therefore easily received by the imagination and assimilated to common life; the diction is exquisitely harmonious, and soft or sprightly as occasion requires.

“The character of *Lothario* seems to have been expanded by Richardson into *Lovelace*; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. *Lothario* with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the Spectator’s kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation, to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite, and lose at last the Hero in the Villain.

“The fifth act is not equal to the former; the events of the drama are exhausted, and little remains but to talk of what is past. It has been observed, that the title of the play does not sufficiently correspond with the behaviour of Calista, who at last shews no evident signs of repentance, but may be reasonably suspected of feeling pain from detection rather than from guilt, and expresses more shame than sorrow, and more rage than shame.”

His next play (1706) was “*Ulysses*,” which is now neglected, as is also the “*Royal Convert*,”

which appeared in 1708. He once ventured on a comedy, and produced the "Biter" (1706); but finding the little success it had, he tried at lighter scenes no more.

After the "Royal Convert", appeared (1714) "Jane Shore," written, as its Author professes, *in imitation of Shakespeare's style*. Johnson denies that it in the least resembles Shakespeare's manner of writing; but says—

"This play, consisting chiefly of domestic scenes and private distress, lays hold on the heart. The wife is forgiven because she repents, and the husband is honoured because he forgives. This therefore is one of those pieces which we still welcome on the stage."

His last tragedy (1715) was "Lady Jane Grey," but it has now sunk into oblivion. From this time he gave nothing more to the stage.

In 1709 he undertook an edition of Shakespeare's Works, from which he did not receive much additional fame. Being Under-Secretary for three years, when the Duke of Queensberry was Secretary of State, he afterwards applied to the Earl of Oxford for some public employment. Oxford enjoined him to study Spanish, and when some time afterwards he came again, and said he had mastered it, the Earl dismissed him with this congratulation, "Then, Sir, I envy you the pleasure of reading "Don Quixotte" in the original."

At the accession of King George the First he was made Poet-laureat, it is said, by the ejection of poor Nahum Tate, who (1716) died in the Mint,

where he was forced to seek shelter from extreme poverty. He was made likewise one of the Land Surveyors of the Customs of the Port of London. The Prince of Wales chose him Clerk of his council; and the Lord Chancellor Parker, as soon as he received the seals, appointed him, unasked, Secretary of the Presentations.

Having already translated some parts of "Lucan's Pharsalia," he undertook a version of the whole work, which he lived to finish, but not to publish. It seems to have been printed under the care of Dr. Welwood. Rowe died the 6th of December, 1718, in the forty-fifth year of his age. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

"Rowe is chiefly to be considered as a tragic writer and a translator. In his attempt at Comedy he failed so ignominiously that his "Biter" is not inserted in his works; and his occasional poems and short compositions are rarely worthy of either praise or censure, for they seem the casual sports of a mind seeking rather to answer its leisure than to exercise its power.

———"I know not that there can be found in his plays any deep search into nature, any accurate discrimination of kindred qualities, or nice display of passion in its progress; all is general and undefined. Nor does he much interest or affect the auditor, except in "Jane Shore", who is always seen and heard with pity. Alicia is a character of empty noise, with no resemblance to real sorrow or to natural madness.

"Whence then has Rowe his reputation? from

the reasonableness and propriety of some of his scenes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom moves either pity or terror, but he often elevates the sentiments; he seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.

“His translation of the “Golden Verses,” and of the first book of “Quillet’s Poem,” have nothing in them remarkable. The “Golden Verses” are tedious. The version “of Lucan” is one of the greatest productions of English poetry; for there is perhaps none that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original—“Lucan” is distinguished by a kind of dictatorial or philosophic dignity, rather, as Quintilian observes, declamatory than poetical; full of ambitious morality and pointed sentences, comprised in vigorous and animated lines. This character Rowe has very diligently and successfully preserved. His versification, which is such as his contemporaries practised, without any attempt at innovation or improvement, seldom wants either melody or force. His Author’s sense is sometimes a little dilated by additional infusions, and sometimes weakened by too much expansion. But such faults are to be expected in all translations from the constraint of measures and dissimilitude of languages. The “Pharsalia” of Rowe deserves more notice than it obtains, and as it is more read will be more esteemed.”

TICKELL.

THOMAS TICKELL, the son of the Reverend Richard Tickell, was born in 1686 at Bridekirk in Cumberland; and in April 1701 became a member of Queen's College in Oxford. In 1708 he was made Master of Arts, and two years afterwards was chosen Fellow; for which, as he did not comply with the statutes by taking orders, he obtained a dispensation from the Crown. He held his fellowship till 1726, and then vacated it by marrying, in that year, at Dublin.

He entered early into the world, and was long busy in public affairs, in which he was initiated under the patronage of Addison, whose notice he is said to have gained by his verses in praise of "Rosamond." "Among the innumerable poems of the same kind (says Johnson) it will be hard to find one with which they need to fear a comparison." He produced another piece of the same kind at the appearance of "Cato" with equal skill, but not equal happiness.

When the Ministers of Queen Anne were negotiating with France, Tickell published "The Prospect of Peace," a poem, of which the tendency was to reclaim the Nation from the pride of conquest to the pleasures of tranquillity. Addison in the "Spectator" speaks of it in the highest terms, but Johnson thought it unequal to the honours which it had received.

At the arrival of King George he sung the "Royal

Progress"; but the most important poetical incident in his life was his publication of the first book of the "Iliad," as translated by himself, in apparent opposition to "Pope's Homer," of which the first part made its entrance into the world at the same time. Pope always considered Addison as the writer of "Tickell's Version," with what truth we know not.

When the Hanover succession was disputed, Tickell published his "Letter to Avignon," which stands high among party-poems. He was now intimately united to Mr. Addison, who, when he went to Ireland as Secretary to the Lord Sunderland, took him thither, and employed him in public business, and when afterwards (1717) he rose to be Secretary of State made him Under-Secretary. Their friendship seems to have continued without abatement; for, when Addison died, he left him the charge of publishing his works, with a solemn recommendation to the patronage of Craggs.

To these works he prefixed an elegy on the Author—and Johnson says, that "there is not a more sublime or more elegant funeral poem to be found in the whole compass of English literature."

He was afterwards (about 1725) made Secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland, in which he continued till 1740, when he died on the 23d of April at Bath.

"Of the poems yet unmentioned, the longest is "Kensington Gardens," of which the versification is smooth and elegant, but the fiction

unskilfully compounded of Grecian Deities and Gothic Fairies. Neither species of those exploded beings could have done much; and when they are brought together, they only make each other contemptible. To Tickell, however, cannot be refused a high place among the Minor Poets; nor should it be forgotten that he was one of the contributors to the "Spectator." With respect to his personal character, he is said to have been a man of gay conversation, at least a temperate lover of wine and company, and in his domestic relations without censure."

CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE, descended from a family in Staffordshire of so great antiquity that it claims a place among the few that extend their line beyond the Norman Conquest, was the son of William Congreve, second son of Richard Congreve, of Congreve and Stratton. If the inscription upon his Monument be true, he was born in 1672.—The biographers assign his nativity to Berdsa near Leeds in Yorkshire from the accounts given by himself. He is generally supposed to have been born in Ireland.

Wherever he was born, he was educated first at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Dublin, his father having some military employment that stationed him in Ireland; but after having passed through the usual preparatory studies, his father thought it

proper to assign him a profession; and about the time of the Revolution sent him, at the age of fifteen, to study law in the Middle Temple, where he lived for several years, but with very little attention to Statutes or Reports.

His disposition to become an Author appeared very early. His first performance was a Novel, called "Incognita, or Love and Duty reconciled", which is much praised by the biographers. His first dramatic labour was the "Old Bachelor," which, whenever written, was acted (1693) when he was not more than twenty-one years old. Dryden said that he never had seen such a first play. Few theatrical pieces have ever been so beneficial to the writer; for it procured him the patronage of Halifax, who immediately made him one of the Commissioners for licensing Coaches, and soon after gave him a place in the Pipe Office, and another in the Customs of 600*l.* per annum.

Next year he gave another specimen of his abilities in "The Double Dealer," which was not received so well as the other. Queen Mary conferred upon both these plays the honour of her presence; and when she died, soon after, Congreve testified his gratitude (as Johnson says) "by a despicable effusion of elegiac pastoral; a composition in which all is unnatural, and yet nothing is new."

In another year (1695) his prolific pen produced "Love for Love," a comedy of nearer alliance to life, and exhibiting more real manners than either of the former. With this play was opened the New

Theatre under the direction of Betterton the tragedian, where he exhibited two years afterwards (1697) "The Mourning Bride," a tragedy so written as to shew him sufficiently qualified for either kind of dramatic poetry. He produced these four plays before he had passed his twenty-fifth year. Upon this, Johnson declares, that "among all the efforts of early genius which literary history records, he doubts whether any one can be produced that more surpasses the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve."

About this time Collier made a powerful attack upon the stage and dramatic writers—Congreve and Vanbrugh presented themselves among others as champions on the side of their brother poets—The opposition was fierce, and continued for a long time until at last Comedy grew more modest, and Collier lived to see the reward of his labour in the reformation of the theatre.

Congreve's last play was "The Way of the World," which, although written with great labour and much thought, was received with so little favour that he resolved to commit his quiet and his fame no more to the caprices of an audience. From this time his life ceased to be public : he lived for himself and his friends, who eagerly sought his company, as his manners were polite, and his conversation pleasing. It was thought that he would have been displaced on the extrusion of his friends the Whigs, but the Earl of Oxford kept him in : and on their return to power he was made Secretary for the Island of Jamaica, which, with

his post in the Customs, is said to have afforded him twelve hundred pounds a year.

Having long conversed familiarly with the great, he wished to be considered rather as a man of fashion than of wit; and when he received a visit from Voltaire, he disgusted him by the despicable foppery of desiring to be considered not as an Author but a Gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, "that if he had been only a *Gentleman* he should not have come to visit him".

In his latter days he was troubled with cataracts in his eyes, which at last terminated in blindness. This melancholy state was aggravated by the gout, for which he sought relief by a journey to Bath; but being overturned in his chariot, he complained from that time of a pain in his side, and died at his house in Surrey-Street in the Strand, January 29, 1728-9. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory by Henrietta Dutchess of Marlborough, to whom, for reasons either not known or not mentioned, he bequeathed a legacy of about 10,000*l.* at the time when the ancient family from which he descended was, by the imprudence of his relations, reduced to difficulties and distress.

"Congreve has merit of the highest kind; he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot, nor the manner of his dialogue. Of his plays I cannot speak distinctly, for since I inspected them many years have passed; but what remains upon my memory is, that his characters

are commonly fictitious and artificial, with very little of nature, and not much of life.¹ He formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, which he supposed to consist in gay remarks and unexpected answers; but that which he endeavoured he seldom failed of performing. His scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion : his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscations. His comedies have therefore, in some degree, the operation of tragedies; they surprise rather than divert, and raise admiration oftener than merriment : but they are the works of a mind replete with images, and quick in combination.

“ Of his miscellaneous poetry I cannot say any thing very favourable. The powers of Congreve seem to desert him when he leaves the stage, as Anteus was no longer strong than he could touch the ground. It cannot be observed without wonder, that a mind so vigorous and fertile in dramatic compositions should on any other occasion discover nothing but impotence and poverty. He has in these little pieces neither elevation of fancy, selection of language, nor skill in versification : yet if I were required to select from the whole mass of English poetry the most poetical paragraph, I know not

¹ See a very different opinion by Dryden in a Letter to Walsh, never printed, but quoted by Mr. Seward, ANECDOTES, vol. II, p. 102.

what I could prefer to an exclamation in "The Mourning Bride:"

ALMERIA.

It was a fancy'd noise ; for all is hush'd.

LEONORA.

It bore the accent of a human voice.

ALMERIA.

It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling thro' hollows of this vaulted isle—
We'll listen—

LEONORA.

Hark!

ALMERIA.

No—all is hush'd, and still as death—'Tis dreadful!
How rev'rend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable!
Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight! The tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chilness to my trembling heart—
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes!

" He who reads these lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet; he feels what he remembers to have felt before, but he feels it with great increase of sensibility; he recognizes a familiar image,

but meets it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty."

"While Comedy or while Tragedy is regarded, his plays are likely to be read; but, except what relates to the stage, I know not that he has ever written a stanza that is sung, or a couplet that is quoted. The general character of his *Miscellanies* is, that they shew little wit, and little virtue.

"Yet to him it must be confessed that we are indebted for the correction of a national error, and the cure of our Pindaric madness. He first taught the English writers that "*Pindar's Odes*" were regular; and though certainly he had not the fire requisite for the higher species of lyric poetry, he has shewn us that enthusiasm has its rules, and that in mere confusion there is neither grace nor greatness."

FENTON.

ELISHA FENTON was born near Newcastle, in Staffordshire, of an ancient family whose estate was very considerable; but he was the younger of twelve children, and, being therefore necessarily destined to some lucrative employment, was sent first to school, and afterwards to Cambridge: but, doubting the legality of the government, and refusing to qualify himself for public employment by the oaths required, he left the University without a degree. By this perverseness of integrity he was driven out a commoner of nature, and reduced to

pick up a livelihood fortuitous and uncertain; but it must be remembered that he kept his name unsullied, and that whoever mentioned Fenton mentioned him with hononr.

From the imperfect account left of this writer, it is impossible to trace him from year to year. He was a while Secretary to Charles Earl of Orrery in Flanders, and tutor to his young son. He was at one time assistant in the school of Mr. Bonwicke in Surrey; and at another kept a school for himself at Seven Oaks in Kent; but was persuaded to leave it (1710) by Mr. St. John with promises of a more honourable employment. Before this, he had extolled the Duke of Marlborough and his family in an "Elegiac Pastoral," and in 1707 published a collection of poems.

When Pope, after the great success of his "Iliad", undertook the "Odyssey," he determined to engage auxiliaries. Broome and Fenton had twelve books distributed between them. Fenton translated the first, the fourth, the nineteenth, and the twentieth, and with so much success, together with his associate, that their books cannot be distinguished from those of Pope.

In 1723 was performed his tragedy of "Mariamne." Cibber rejected it, but it was afterwards played at the other theatre and received with general applause. The author's profits are said to have amounted to near 1000l.

It was perhaps after this play that he undertook to revise the punctuation of Milton's poems. To this edition he prefixed a short and elegant account

of Milton's life, written at once with tenderness and integrity. He likewise published (1729) a very splendid edition of Waller with notes.

The latter part of his life was calm and pleasant. The relict of Sir William Trumbal invited him, by Pope's recommendation, to educate her son. She afterwards detained him with her as the auditor of her accounts. He died in 1730 at East Hampstead in Berkshire, the seat of the Lady Trumbal; and Pope, who had been always his friend, honoured him with an epitaph.

“ In his person, Fenton was tall and bulky, inclined to corpulence, which he did not lessen by much exercise; for he was very sluggish and sedentary, rose late, and when he had risen sat down to his book or papers. A woman, that had once waited on him in a lodging, told him, as she said, that he would *lie a bed, and be fed with a spoon*. This, however, was not the worst that might have been prognosticated, for Pope says, in his letter, that *he died of indolence*; but his immediate distemper was the gout.

“ Of his morals and his conversation the account is uniform : he was never named but with praise and fondness as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given him by the Earl of Orrery, his pupil; such is the testimony of Pope, and such were the suffrages of all who could boast of his acquaintance.”

His collection of poems is now to be considered. The “Ode to the Sun” is written upon a common plan without uncommon sentiments, but its greatest

fault is its length. No poem should be long, of which the purpose is only to strike the fancy, without enlightening the understanding by precept, ratiocination, or narrative. A blaze first pleases, and then tires the sight."

"To examine his performances one by one would be tedious. His "Translations from Homer" into blank verse will find few readers while another can be had in rhyme. The piece addressed to Lambarde is no disagreeable specimen of epistolary poetry, and his "Ode to the Lord Gower" was pronounced by Pope the next ode in the English language to Dryden's Cecilia. Fenton may be justly esteemed an excellent versifyer, and a good poet."

PRIOR.

MATTHEW PRIOR was born July 21, 1664, according to some at Winbourne in Dorsetshire, of what parents is not exactly known; others say that he was the son of a joiner of London^r.

He is supposed to have fallen by his father's death into the hands of his uncle, a vintner near Charing - Cross, who sent him for some time to Dr. Busby at Westminster; but, when he was advanced in literature, took him to his own house,

^r When he stood candidate for his fellowship at Cambridge, he was registered by himself as of Middlesex. This record, being on oath, ought to be preferred.

where the Earl of Dorset, celebrated for patronage of genius, found him by chance, as Burnet relates, reading Horace, and was so well pleased with his proficiency that he undertook the care and cost of his academical education.

He entered his name in St. John's College at Cambridge in 1682, in his eighteenth year. He became a bachelor, as is usual, in four years, and two years afterwards wrote the poem on the "Deity," which stands first in his volume. The same year he published "The City Mouse and Country Mouse," to ridicule Dryden's "Hind and Panther," in conjunction with Mr. Montague.

The "City Mouse and Country Mouse" caused its authors to be speedily preferred. Montague indeed obtained the first notice, but Prior had not afterwards much reason to complain; for in 1691 he was sent to the Congress at the Hague as Secretary to the Embassy, in which assembly was formed the grand alliance against Lewis. The conduct of Prior was so pleasing to King William that he made him one of the Gentlemen of his bedchamber; and he is supposed to have passed some of the next years in the cultivation of literature and poetry.

Prior, who was both a poet and a courtier, was not likely to miss the opportunity of paying respect to William on the death of Queen Mary (in 1695). He wrote a long ode on the occasion, which was presented to the King. In two years after he was Secretary to another embassy at the treaty of Ryswick, in 1697; and next year had the same office

at the court of France, where he is said to have been considered with great distinction.

He was in the following year at Loo with the King, from whom, after a long audience, he carried orders to England, and upon his arrival became under-secretary of state in the Earl of Jersey's office, a post which he did not retain long, because Jersey was removed; but he was soon made Commissioner of Trade.

This year (1700) produced one of his longest and most splendid compositions, "the *Carmen Seculare*." In the Parliament that met in 1701, he was chosen representative of East Grinstead. Perhaps it was about this time that he changed his party; for he voted for the impeachment of those lords who had persuaded the King to the *Partition-treaty*, a treaty in which he had himself been ministerially employed.

A great part of Queen Anne's reign was a time of war, in which there was little employment for negociators, and Prior had therefore leisure to make or to publish verses. When the battle of Blenheim called forth all the versemen, Prior, among the rest, took care to shew his delight in the increasing honour of his country by an "Epistle to Boileau." He published soon after a volume of poems.

The battle of Ramilies (in 1706) excited him to another effort of poetry, and in the paper of the "Examiner" then published he wrote an essay in ridicule of "Garth's verses to Godolphin upon the loss of his place."

The Tories, who were now in power, were in haste to end the war; and Prior was sent (July 1711) privately to Paris with propositions of peace. He returned in about a month, and brought with him M. Mesnager, a minister from France, invested with full powers, and the Abbé Gaultier.

The negociation was begun at Prior's house, where the Queen's ministers met Mesnager (September 20, 1721), and entered privately upon the great business, the design of treating not being yet openly declared. This clandestine meeting was aggravated, when the Whigs returned to power, to a charge of high treason.

The peace advancing slowly, Bolingbroke was sent to Paris to adjust differences with less formality. Prior was also sent, who, after continuing to act without a title for some time, assumed by authority the stile and dignity of Ambassador. Prior's public splendour commenced in August 1713, and continued till the August following.

On the first of August 1714 ensued the downfall of the Tories and the degradation of Prior. He was recalled; but was not able to return, being detained by the debts which he had found it necessary to contract, and which were not discharged before March. He returned then as soon as he could, and was welcomed on the 25th of March by a warrant, and, after an examination before a committee of the Privy Council, was put into no stricter confinement than his own house, in which he had been suffered to live under the

custody of the messenger. On the tenth of June 1715 Mr. Walpole moved for an impeachment against him, and Prior was, a week after, committed to close custody with orders that *no person should be admitted to see him without leave from the Speaker.*

When, two years after, an Act of Grace was passed, he was excepted, and continued still in custody, which he had made less tedious by writing "Alma." He was, however, soon after discharged.

He had now his liberty ; but whatever the profits of his employments might have been, he had always spent them ; and at the age of fifty-three was, with all his abilities, in danger of penury, having no solid revenue but from the fellowship of his college ¹. Being however generally known and esteemed, he was encouraged to add other poems to those which he had printed, and publish them by subscription. The price of the volume was two guineas, and the whole collection was four thousand ; to which Lord Harley, the son of the Earl of Oxford, to whom he had invariably adhered, added an equal sum for the purchase of Down-hall, which Prior was to enjoy during life, and Harley after his decease.

There is no account of any occurrences in his

¹ Mr. Seward says, "Prior kept his fellowship of St. John's college, Cambridge, to the last." "The salary," said he, "will always ensure me a bit of mutton and a clean shirt." ANECDOTES, vol. II, 306.

remaining life *. He died at *Wimple*, a seat of the Earl of Oxford, the 18th of September 1721, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

* Prior, as Mr. Seward tells us, in the latter part of his life resided at Down-hall, Essex, and amused himself with a select party of friends at any kind of nonsense that occurred. Sir James Thornhill was often of the party, and in the evening, between dinner and supper, used to make drawings of some of Mr. Prior's guests. Prior used to write verses under them. Under the head of M. Timothy Thomas, Chaplain to Lord Oxford, Prior wrote—

This phiz, so well drawn, you may easily know,
It was done by a Knight for one Tom with an O.
Under Christian, the Seal Engraver's head, Prior wrote—
This done by candle light and hazard,
Is meant to shew Kit Christian's mazzard.

An ingenious and elegant collector has many of these portraits with the verses under them in Prior's handwriting.

At Lord Oxford's seat at *Wimple* (now Lord Hardwicke's) there hung a fine picture of Harley, in his Speaker's robes, with the roll of the bill in his hand for bringing in the present family; which, if I mistake not, was done by the casting vote. In allusion to Harley's being afterwards sent to the Tower, Prior wrote with a pencil on the white scroll, "bill paid on such a day."

He, like many an ex-minister, became hypochondriacal in the latter part of his life; his active mind, not having any pabulum to feed it, began to prey upon itself. He became deaf, or at least thought himself so. When some one asked him, whether he had ever observed himself deaf when he was in office, "Faith, replied he, "I was then so afraid of my head that I did not attend very much to my ears." ANECDOTES, vol. II, 305.

Johnson divides his works into tales, love-verses, occasional poems, "Alma" and "Solomon."

"The greatest of all his amorous essays is "Henry and Emma," a dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither esteem for the man nor tenderness for the woman. The example of Emma, who resolves to follow an outlawed murderer wherever fear and guilt shall drive him, deserves no imitation; and the experiment by which Henry tries the lady's constancy is such as must end either in infamy to her, or in disappointment to himself."

"Alma" is written in professed imitation of Hudibras, and has at least one accidental resemblance. Hudibras wants a plan, because it is left imperfect; "Alma" is imperfect, because it seems never to have had a plan. Prior appears not to have proposed to himself any drift or design, but to have written the casual dictates of the present moment.

"What Horace said when he imitated Lucilius might be said of Butler by Prior, his numbers were not smooth or neat : Prior excelled him in versification, but he was like Horace *inventore minor*; he had not Butler's exuberance of matter and variety of illustration. The sparkle of wit which he could afford, he knew how to polish; but he wanted the bullion of his master. Butler pours out a negligent profusion, certain of the weight, but careless of the stamp. Prior has comparatively little, but with that little he makes a fine shew. "Alma" has many admirers, and was the only piece among Prior's works of which Pope said that he should wish to be the author."

“ His “ Solomon ” was undoubtedly written with great labour; and who is willing to think that he has been labouring in vain! — He had infused into it much knowledge and much thought; had often polished it to elegance, often dignified it with splendour, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity; he perceived in it many excellencies, and did not discover that it wanted that without which all others are of small avail, the power of engaging attention and alluring curiosity.

“ The tediousness of this poem proceeds not from the uniformity of the subject, for it is sufficiently diversified, but from the continued tenor of the narration; in which Solomon relates the successive vicissitudes of his own mind, without the intervention of any other speaker, or the mention of any other agent, unless it be Abra; and the reader is only to learn what he thought, and to be told that he thought wrong. The event of every experiment is foreseen, and therefore the process is not much regarded.

“ Yet the work is far from deserving to be neglected. He that shall peruse it will be able to mark many passages, to which he may recur for instruction or delight, many from which the poet may learn to write, and the philosopher to reason.”

“ If Prior’s poetry be generally considered, his praise will be that of correctness and industry, rather than of compass of comprehension, or activity of fancy. He never made any effort of invention: his greater pieces were all tissues of

sentiments, and his smaller, which consist of light images or single conceits, were not always his own. I have traced him among the French epigrammatists, and have been informed that he poached for prey among obscure authors."

"Prior is never low, nor very often sublime. It is said by Longinus of Euripides, that he forces himself sometimes into grandeur by violence of effort, as the lion kindles his fury by the lashes of his own tail. Whatever Prior obtains above mediocrity seems the effort of struggle and of pain. He has many vigorous, but few happy lines; he has every thing by purchase, and nothing by gift; he had no *nightly visitations* of the muse, no infusions of sentiment or felicities of fancy."

"Some of his poems are written without regularity of measures; for, when he commenced poet, we had not recovered from our Pindaric infatuation; but he probably lived to be convinced that the essence of verse is order and consonance.

"His numbers are such as mere diligence may attain; they seldom offend the ear, and seldom sooth it; they commonly want airiness, lightness, and facility; what is smooth is not soft. His verses always roll, but they seldom flow." ¹

¹ The late excellent Duchess of Portland had five Dialogues of the Dead in MS. written by this celebrated Poet ^a.

^a Prior's Dialogues in the Duchess of Portland's possession are thus described in the Preface to Nichols's "Collection of Poems:"

"The late Recorder of Cambridge [Pont] had seen some MS. Dialogues of the Dead of Prior's; they were prose, but had verse

POPE.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained. We are informed that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head, and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esq. of York.

This is told by Pope. It is allowed that his father grew rich by trade, but whether in a shop or on the exchange has never been discovered. Both parents were Papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate; his voice, when he was young, was so pleasing that he was called in fondness the *Little Nightingale*.

Not being sent early to school, he was taught to intermixed freely; and the specimen, I heard, proved it. The Dialogue was between Sir Thomas More and the Vicar of Bray. You must allow that the characters are well chosen; and the speakers maintain their respective opinions smartly; at last the Knight seems to come over to his adversary, at least so far as to allow that the doctrine was convenient, if not honourable; but that he did not see how any man could allow himself to act thus; when the Vicar concludes: Nothing easier, with proper management, &c. You must go the right way to work—

For Conscience, like a fiery horse,
Will stumble, if you check his course:
But ride him with an easy rein,
And rub him down with worldly gain,
He'll carry you through thick and thin,
Safe, although dirty, to your inn."

"This certainly is sterling sense."

read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old, became a lover of books.

When he was about eight, he was placed in Hampshire under a Romish priest who taught him the Greek and Latin. He was first regularly initiated in poetry by the perusal of Ogilby's "Homer" and Sandys's "Ovid." He was now removed to a school at Twyfort near Winchester, and again to another school about Hyde Park Corner, from which he used sometimes to stroll to the play-house, and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions that he formed a kind of play from Ogilby's "Iliad," which he persuaded his school-fellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener who personated *Ajax*. It was under the two last masters he translated more than a fourth part of the "Metamorphoses." He used to say that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses.

About the period of the Revolution his father quitted his trade, whatever it was, and retired to Binfield in Windsor forest with about twenty thousand pounds, which he locked up in a chest, and took from it what his expences required. To this place Pope was called by his father when he was about twelve years old, and then had for a few months the assistance of another priest.

Pope, finding little advantage from external help, resolved thenceforward to direct himself, and, at twelve formed a plan of study which he completed with little other incitement than the desire of excellence, and his primary and principal purpose was to be a poet.

In his perusal of the English poets he soon distinguished the versification of Dryden, and was impressed with such veneration for his character, that he persuaded some friend to take him to the Coffee House which Dryden frequented, and pleased himself with having seen him. Dryden died May 1, 1701, some days before Pope was twelve.

The earliest of Pope's productions is his "Ode on Solitude," written about the above age; as he read the Classics, he amused himself with translating them. At fourteen he made a version of the first book of the "Thebais." He gave "Chaucer" a more fashionable appearance, and put "January and May," and the "Prologue of the Wife of Bath" into modern English. He translated likewise the Epistle of "Sappho to Phaon" from Ovid, to complete the version which was before imperfect; and wrote some other small pieces which he afterwards printed. At fourteen he wrote his poem of "Silence" after the manner of Rochester's "Nothing," and also his "Windsor Forest." Next year he removed for a time to London, that he might study French and Italian. He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He wrote a Comedy, a Tragedy, an Epic poem, with panegyrics on all the Princes of Europe. Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgment, afterwards destroyed. "Alcander," the Epic Poem, was burnt by the persuasion of Atterbury. The Tragedy was founded on the legend of "St. Genevieve." Of the Comedy there is no account.

He next translated Tully "on Old Age." Sir Wm. Trumbul, who had been Secretary of State, when he retired from business, fixed his residence in the neighbourhood of Binfield. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the Statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence.

He now wrote his "Pastorals," although they were not published till five years afterwards. At this time began his acquaintance with Wicherley and Mr. Cromwel.

Walsh the Critic was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained by the "Pastorals." Walsh advised him to correctness, and, being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral Comedy, a design which Pope did not follow.

He began at seventeen to frequent Wills's, a Coffee House on the North side of Russel Street in Covent Garden, where the Wits at that time used to assemble. During this part of his life he was indefatigably diligent. The account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction.

The pastorals, which had been for some time handed about among Poets and Critics, were at last printed (1709) in Tonson's Miscellany, in a volume which began with the "Pastorals of Philips," and ended with those of Pope. The same year was written the "Essay on Criticism," and published about two years afterwards. It was

much and deservedly praised by Addison in the "Spectator," but was pretty severely attacked by Dennis.

Of this Essay Pope declared that he did not expect the sale to be quick, because *not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it.* He mentions a thousand copies as a numerous impression. It has been translated into French by *Hamilton*, and commented by Dr. Warburton.

In the "Spectator" was published the "Messiah," which he first submitted to the perusal of Steele, and corrected in compliance with his criticisms. The verses on the "Unfortunate Lady," it is supposed, were written about the time when his "Essay" was published. Not long after he wrote the "Rape of the Lock," the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions, occasioned by Lord Petre cutting off a lock of Mrs Arabella Fermor's hair. It was written, as is said, in a fortnight (1711) and at its first appearance it was termed by Addison *merum sal.* Pope always considered the intertexture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce any thing of such unexampled excellence.

About this time he published "The Temple of Fame," which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before.

Of the Epistle from "Eloisa to Abelard," the date is not known. His first inclination to attempt

a composition of that tender kind arose, according to Savage, from his perusal of Prior's "Nut Brown Maid." It may be said with justice that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though upon what principle he slighted it is not known.

In the next year (1713) he published "Windsor Forest," of which part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his "Pastorals," and the latter part was added afterwards. "Cato" being now revived, Pope introduced it by a Prologue.

It appears that about this time he had a strong inclination to unite the art of painting with that of poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas. A picture of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession of Lord Mansfield : if this was taken from life, he must have begun to paint early, for Betterton was now dead. It is said that he made no great proficiency in the art.

The next year (1713) produced an attempt by which profit was sought as well as praise. He resolved to try how far the favour of the public extended by soliciting a subscription to a Version of the "Iliad."

There was reason to believe that his attempt would be successful, for he was in the full bloom of reputation. He therefore offered an English "Iliad" to subscribers in six volumes in quarto for six guineas. His proposal was so very favourably

received that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness : but the highest bidder was Bernard Lintot, who, notwithstanding all his hopes and his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the English “Iliad” was printed in Holland in duodecimo, and imported clandestinely for those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. Of this edition the sale was doubtless very numerous.

Pope having now emitted his proposals, and fully engaged his reputation in the undertaking, began to be frightened with the importance of the attempt.—He had his nights disturbed by dreams of long journies through unknown ways, and wished, as he said, *that somebody would hang him.*

This misery, however, was not of long continuance ; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer’s images and expressions, and practice increased his felicity of versification. In a short time he represents himself as dispatching regularly fifty verses a day. Thus by his own diligence, and with such help as kindness of money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the “Iliad” with the Notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year, and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year.

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have over-rated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were five hundred and fifty-four. For those copies Pope had nothing to pay ; he therefore

received, including two hundred pounds a volume allowed him by the bookseller, 5300l. 4s. without deduction, as the books were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was not only relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwithstanding his popularity, he had hitherto struggled, but his future life was secured from want by considerable annuities. Johnson says, that the English "Iliad" is certainly "the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen."

It was published volume by volume, as the translation proceeded; the first four books appeared in 1715.

The reputation of this great work served to deprive him of a friend. Addison and he were now at the head of poetry and criticism; and both in such a state of elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman state, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a superior. From the emission and reception of the proposals of the "Iliad," the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Steele, with the best intentions, procured at last an interview between them. On this occasion, it is said, many invectives were made use of on both sides, till the contest at length rose so high that they parted without any interchange of civility.

When the first volume was published, a rival version of the first "Iliad" was immediately printed with the name of Tickell. Addison gave it the preference, but the public voice was not long suspended,

and Pope's performance was universally considered the best.

He now wrote his satire on Addison, and he relates that Addison used him very civilly ever after.

This year (1715) having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, only for his life, that house at Twickenham to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebrity, and removed there with his father and mother.

While the volumes of his "Homer" were annually published, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume. In this year his father died suddenly in his 75th year.

The publication of the "Iliad" was completed in 1720. The splendor and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, most of whose names are preserved only in the "Dunciad."

In this disastrous and infatuated year 1720, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South Sea, Pope was seized with the universal passion of avarice. He ventured his money, and lost, with thousands, something considerable.

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr. Parnel, and an edition of *Shakespeare*—Theobald also published an edition, and detected Pope's deficiencies, who seems never after to have reflected on his own undertaking without vexation.

Soon after the appearance of the "Iliad,"

resolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the "Odyssey" in five volumes, for five guineas. He engaged the assistance of Fenton and Broome in order to ease him of the labour.

In 1723, while he was busied in this new version, he appeared before the Lords at the memorable trial of Bishop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity. He was called to give an account of Atterbury's domestic life. Pope had but few words to utter, and in those few he made several blunders.

Of the "Odyssey" Pope translated only twelve books; the rest were the work of Broome and Fenton; the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The first copy of Pope's books, with those of Fenton, are to be seen in the Museum. The parts of Pope are less interlined than the "Iliad," and the latter books of the "Iliad" less than the former. The books of Fenton have very few alterations by the hand of Pope. Those of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them.

His contract with Lintot was the same as for the "Iliad," except that only one hundred pounds were to be paid him for each volume. The number of subscribers were 574, and of copies 819; so that his profit, when he had paid his assistants, was still very considerable. The work was finished in 1725; and from that time he resolved to make no more

translations. The sale did not answer Lintot's expectations.

Some time after, Pope lost the use of two of his fingers by their being severely cut with some fragments of glass on his being overturned in a friend's coach. Voltaire, who was then in England, sent him a letter of condolence, but Pope never considered him as a man worthy of confidence.

He soon afterwards (1727) joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publish three volumes of "Miscellanies." In these was first published the "Art of Sinking in Poetry." In the following year (1728) the "Dunciad" made its appearance, one of his greatest and most elaborate performances.

At the head of the Dunces he placed poor Theobald, whom he accused of ingratitude, but whose real crime was supposed to be that of having revised Shakespeare more happily than himself. This satire had the effect which he intended by blasting the characters which it touched.

After this general war upon dullness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile in tranquillity; but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published (1731) a poem on "Taste."

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he seemed to love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old. In the next year he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death, for she had lasted to the age of 93.

Pope's letters being surreptitiously published, he was determined to vindicate his own property by a genuine edition. He therefore solicited a subscription for a quarto volume, which appeared 1737. Before this time he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of ethics under the title of an "Essay on Man," which, according to a letter he wrote to Swift, had been eight years under his consideration. In 1733 appeared the first part, which, together with the second and third, were published without the real author's name. At last, in 1734, he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

Its reputation soon invited a translation. It was first turned into French prose, and afterwards by Resnel into verse. His enemies spread abroad the idea, that his positions, as they terminated for the most part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation. His friend Warburton undertook to rescue him from the imputation of favouring fatality, and for a long time continued a vindication of the "Essay on Man" in the literary journal of that period, called the "Republic of Letters."

It was now his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the "Epistle to Lord Bathurst (1733) on the Use of Riches." He afterwards (1734) inscribed to Lord Cobham his "Characters of Men." To this he added soon after the "Characters of Women."

From time to time (between 1730 and 1740) he published imitations of different poems of Horace, and also a revival, in smoother numbers, of "Dr. Donne's Satires." The "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" appeared in January 1735. In this poem Pope vindicates himself from censure, and with dignity, rather than arrogance, enforces his own claims to kindness and respect. It is in this poem that the satirical lines upon Addison are introduced.

His last satires of the general kind were two Dialogues named, from the year in which they were published, "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight." The "Memoirs of Scriblerus," published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work projected in concert by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themselves the "Scriblerus-Club." The design was never completed.

From the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's request, another book to the "Dunciad;" and some time after he published a new edition of it in which he degraded *Theobald* from his painful preeminence, and enthroned *Cibber*, with whom he had long been at war, in his stead.

Being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life than the revisal and correction of his former works. He laid aside all thoughts of his epic poem.

Through the next year he perceived himself, as he expresses it, *going down the hill*. Besides the asthma he had other disorders which his physicians were unable to relieve.

In May 1744 his death was approaching ; on the sixth he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man : he afterwards complained of seeing things as through a curtain and in false colours ; and one day, in the presence of Dodsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. Bolingbroke sometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay ; and being told, by Spence, that Pope, in the intermission of his deliriousness, was always saying something kind either of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding, answered, *It has so ;* and added, *I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind*. At another time he said, *I have known Pope these thirty years, and value myself more in his friendship than—*his grief then suppressed his voice.

Pope expressed undoubted confidence of a future state. Being asked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a Papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a priest should not be called, he answered, *I do not think it essential, but it will be very right, and I thank you for putting me in mind of it.*

In the morning, after the priest had given him

the last sacrament, he said, *There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue.*

He died in the evening of the 30th of May 1744 so placidly that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham near his father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator the Bishop of Gloucester.

Speaking of Pope's person and private manners Dr. Johnson says,

“ He compared himself to a spider, and is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy, but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender form are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

“ By natural deformity or accidental distortion his vital functions were so much disordered that his life was a *long disease*. His most frequent assailant was the head-ach, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

“ In the middle of life he was so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance, and so extremely sensible of cold that he wore a kind of fur doublet under a shirt of very coarse warm

linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvass, being scarce able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings which were drawn on and off by the maid, for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

“ His hair had fallen almost all away, and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tye wig, and a little sword.

“ When he wanted to sleep, he *nodded in company*; and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

“ The reputation which his friendship gave, procured him many invitations, but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them.

“ His errands were so frequent and frivolous that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him.

“ One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very troublesome; but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep.

“ He was too indulgent to his appetite; he

loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and at the intervals of the table amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion; and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it ¹. ”

“ In all his intercourse with mankind he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. *He hardly drank tea without a stratagem.*

“ In familiar or convivial conversation it does not appear that he excelled. ”

“ He was fretful, and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. ”

“ He sometimes condescended to be jocular with

¹ Mr. Seward has given us an anecdote of Pope as an epicure, which we shall here insert. Pope, like many other affectedly delicate persons, professed to be fond of certain dishes merely on account of their rarity. A nobleman, a friend of his, who wished to correct this disgusting failing in him, made his cook dress up a rabbit, trussed up as a foreign bird, to which he gave some fine name, and seasoned it with something extremely savoury. The bard ate of it very heartily, and expressed his relish of the taste of the supposed dainty; and was not a little displeased when his friend told him the trick he had put upon him.

servants or inferiors, but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter."

"Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. This sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the backs of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the "*Iliad*," by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment; as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint of wine upon the table, and, having himself taken two small glasses, would retire, and say, *Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine.*

"It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related that, in the dreadful winter of 1740, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night to supply him with paper lest he should lose a thought."

"His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous, but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a year that he raised for Savage twenty were paid by himself."

"In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant."

"The religion in which he lived was that of the church of Rome, to which in his correspondence

with Racine he professes himself a sincere adherent. ”

“ He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection. ”

“ The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of “ Thirty-eight, ” of which Dodsley told me that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. *Every line, said he, was then written twice over ; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press with every line written twice over a second time.*

“ Of the Pastorals of Pope, ” says Dr. Johnson, “ the last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author’s favourite. To tell of disappointment and misery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty has been always a delicious employment of the poets. His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked a line in which the *Zephyrs* are made *to lament in silence.* ”

“ The design of “ Windsor Forest ” is evidently derived from “ Cooper’s Hill, ” with some attention to Waller’s poem on “ The Park ; ” but Pope cannot be denied to excel his masters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging description, narrative, and morality.

“ The “ Temple of Fame ” has, as Steele warmly declared, *a thousand beauties.* ”

“ That the “ Messiah ” excels the “ Pollio ” is no great praise, if it be considered from what original the improvements are derived.”

“ The “ Verses on the Unfortunate Lady ” have drawn much attention by the illaudable singularity of treating suicide with respect, and they must be allowed to be written in some parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderness; nor has Pope produced any poem in which the sense predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not skilfully told.”

“ The “ Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day ” was undertaken at the desire of Steele : in this the author is generally confessed to have miscarried ; yet he has miscarried only compared with Dryden, for he has far outgone other competitors.”

“ One of his greatest though of his earliest works is the “ Essay on Criticism,” which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first critics, and the first of the poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression.”

“ To the praises which have been accumulated on “ The Rape of the Lock ” by readers of every class, from the critic to the waiting maid, it is difficult to make any addition.”

“ The Epistle of “ Eloisa to Abelard ” is one of the most happy productions of human wit ; the subject is so judiciously chosen, that it would be

difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which so many circumstances concur to recommend."

"The train of my disquisition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the translation of the "Iliad"; a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal."

"He cultivated our language with so much diligence and art that he has left in his "Homer" a treasure of poetical elegancies to posterity. His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for since its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a series of lines so elaborately connected, and so sweetly modulated, took possession of the public ear; the vulgar were enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation."

"Of the "Odyssey" nothing remains to be observed: the same general praise may be given to both translations, and a particular examination of either would require a large volume."

"Of the "Dunciad" the hint is confessedly taken from Dryden's "Mac Fleckno"; but the plan is so enlarged and diversified as justly to claim the praise of an original, and affords perhaps the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous."

"The "Essay on Man" was a work of great labour and long consideration, but certainly not the happiest of Pope's performances."

Dr. Johnson, after condemning its principles, goes on to say, "If I had undertaken to exemplify

Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critic, I should not select the "Essay on Man;" for it contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured, more harshness of diction, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength than will be easily found in all his other works."

"The Characters of Men and Women" are the product of diligent speculation upon human life; much labour has been bestowed upon them, and Pope very seldom laboured in vain."

"After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him. If the writer of the "Iliad" were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of genius."

S W I F T.

JONATHAN SWIFT was, according to an account said to be written by himself, the son of Jonathan Swift an attorney, and was born in Dublin on St. Andrew's day, 1667. According to his own report, as delivered by Pope to Spence, he was born at Leicester, the son of a clergyman, who was minister of a parish in Herefordshire. Whatever was his birth, his education was Irish. He was sent at the age of six to the school of Kilkenny, and in his fifteenth year (1682) was admitted into the University of Dublin.

In his academical studies he was either not diligent or not happy. He obtained his degree of Bachelor of Arts by *special favour*; a term used in that University to denote want of merit.

He resolved from that time to study eight hours a day, and continued his industry for seven years, with what improvement is sufficiently known. In this course of daily application he continued three years longer in Dublin, and in this time, it is said, he drew the first sketch of his "Tale of a Tub."

When he was about one and twenty (1680), being, by the death of Godwin Swift his uncle who had supported him, left without subsistence, he went to consult his mother, who then lived at Leicester, about his future course of life, and by her directions solicited the patronage of Sir William Temple, who had married one of Mrs. Swift's

relations, and whose father, Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, had lived in great familiarity of friendship with Godwin Swift.

Temple was so pleased with the nephew of his father's friend that he detained him two years in his house. Here he became known to King William, who sometimes visited Temple when he was disabled by the gout; and being attended by Swift in the garden, he shewed him how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way.

When Temple removed to Moor-park, he took Swift with him, who was much oppressed with a giddiness and deafness, a malady that pursued him through life, and at last sent him to the grave, deprived of reason. He was advised to try his native air, and went to Ireland; but, finding no benefit, he returned to Sir William, at whose house he continued his studies. He thought exercise of great necessity, and used to run half a mile up and down a hill every two hours.

He now resolved to become a Master of Arts at Oxford. In the testimonial which he produced, the words of disgrace were omitted, and he took his Master's degree (July 5 , 1692) with such reception and regard as fully contented him.

While he lived with Temple, he used to pay his mother at Leicester a yearly visit. He travelled on foot, unless some violent weather drove him into a waggon, and at night he would go to a penny lodging, where he purchased clean sheets for sixpence. In 1694 he quitted Moor-park with discontent.

He now resolved to enter into the church, and obtained in Ireland the prebend of *Kilroot* in Connor, of about one hundred pounds a year. Temple, conscious of having given reasons of complaint, invited him back, with a promise to procure him English preferment. With this request Swift quickly complied, and they lived on together in mutual satisfaction; and in the four years that passed between his return and Temple's death, it is probable that he wrote the "Tale of a Tub," and the "Battle of the Books."

Swift began early to think that he was a poet, and wrote Pindaric odes to Temple, to the King, and to the Athenian Society. It is said that Dryden, having perused these verses, said "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet," and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden.

In 1699 Temple died, and left a legacy, with his manuscripts, to Swift, for whom he had obtained from King William a promise of the first prebend that should be vacant at Westminster or Canterbury; but this promise the King forgot, although Swift endeavoured indirectly to call it to his recollection.

He was then invited by the Earl of Berkley to accompany him to Ireland as his private secretary; but, after having done the business till their arrival at Dublin, he then found that one Bush had persuaded the Earl that a clergyman was not a proper secretary, and had obtained the office for himself. Swift was compelled to content himself with the

livings of *Laracor* and *Rathbeggin* in the diocese of Meath.

Soon after his settlement at *Laracor* he invited to Ireland the unfortunate Stella, a young woman whose name was Johnson, the daughter of the steward of Sir William Temple, who left her a thousand pounds. With her came Mrs. Dingley, whose whole fortune was twenty-seven pounds a year for her life. With those ladies he passed his hours of relaxation ; but they never resided in the same house, nor did he see either without a witness.

His first work, except his few poetical essays, was the “Dissensions in Athens and Rome,” published (1701) in his 34th year. Three years afterwards (1704) was published the “Tale of a Tub,” and next the “Battle of the Books.” It was not till about four years after this period that he became a professed author, and then one year (1708) produced “The Sentiments of a Church of England Man ;” the “Ridicule of Astrology,” under the name of *Bickerstaff*; the “Argument against abolishing Christianity”; and the “Defence of the Sacramental Test.”

In the year following he wrote a “Project for the Advancement of Religion.” He wrote likewise this year a “Vindication of Bickerstaff,” and an explanation of an “Ancient Prophecy.” Soon after began the busy and important part of Swift’s life. He was employed (1710) by the Primate of Ireland to solicit the Queen for a remission of the first fruits and twentieth parts of the Irish clergy.

With this purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley, who soon admitted him to familiarity, glad, no doubt, of having an auxiliary so well qualified for his service. Swift was now immersing into political controversy, for the same year produced the "Examiner," of which he wrote thirty-three papers.

Early in the next year he published "A Proposal for correcting and ascertaining the English Tongue," in a letter to the Earl of Oxford. He wrote the same year a "Letter to the October-Club."

In the midst of the controversies between the Whigs and Tories he attained the zenith of his political importance. He published 1712 "The Conduct of the Allies" ten days before the parliament assembled. The purpose was to persuade the nation to a peace, and never had any writer more success. The power of a political treatise depends much upon the disposition of the people; the nation was then combustible, and a spark set it on fire. It is said that between November and January eleven thousand were sold.

This year (1712) he published his "Reflections on the Barrier Treaty." This was followed by "Remarks on the Bishop of Sarum's Introduction to his third volume of the History of the Reformation."

Swift, being now the declared favourite and supposed confidant of the Tory ministry, was treated by all who depended on the court with the respect which dependents know how to pay. In 1713

he accepted the Deanery of St. Patrick, the best preferment that his friends could venture to give him, in consequence of his performance of the "Tale of a Tub," levelled against the clergy, who in a great degree supported the ministry.

In the midst of his power and his politics he kept a journal of his visits, his walks, his interviews with ministers, and quarrels with his servants, and transmitted it to Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley.

He went to take possession of his Deanery as soon as he obtained it, but he was not suffered to stay in Ireland more than a fortnight before he was recalled to England, that he might reconcile Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, which he attempted in vain. Before this violent dissension had shattered the ministry, Swift had published in the beginning of the year (1714) "The public Spirit of the Whigs," in answer to the "Crisis," a pamphlet for which Steele was expelled the House of Commons.

In this pamphlet the Scots were mentioned in terms so provoking to that irritable nation that the Scotch Lords in a body demanded an audience of the Queen, and solicited reparation. A proclamation was issued, in which three hundred pounds were offered for discovery of the author. From this storm he was, as he relates, *secured by a sleight*. He was become so formidable to the Whigs that his familiarity with the ministry was clamoured at in parliament, particularly by two men, afterwards of great note, *Aislabie* and *Walpole*.

But, by the disunion of his great friends, his

importance and his designs were now at an end; and seeing his services at last useless, he retired about June (1714) into Berkshire, where he wrote what was then suppressed, but has since appeared under the title of "Free Thoughts on the present state of Affairs."

While he was waiting in this retirement, the death of the Queen broke down at once the whole system of Tory politics, and nothing remained but to withdraw from the implacability of triumphant Whiggism and shelter himself in unenvied obscurity. He therefore went over to Ireland; but, having so lately quitted the tumults of a party and the intrigues of a court, his thoughts were still in agitation, and he made some historical attempts relating to the "Change of the Ministers" and the "Conduct of the Ministry." He likewise is said to have written a "History of the four last Years of Queen Anne," which he began in her life time, and afterwards laboured with great attention, but never published.

He now considered himself in a state of exile, and the thoughts of death rushed upon him, at this time, with such incessant importunity, that they took possession of his mind when he first waked for many years together.

He opened his house by a public table two days a week; and found his entertainments gradually frequented by more and more visitants of learning among the men, and of elegance among the women. Mrs. Johnson had left the country, and lived in lodgings not far from the Deanery. On his public

days she regulated the table, but always appeared at it as a mere guest, like other ladies.

On other days he often dined, at a stated price, with Mr. Worral, a clergyman of his cathedral. To this frugal mode of living he was at first disposed by care to pay some debts which he had contracted, and he continued it for the pleasure of accumulating money.

Soon after (1716) in his forty-ninth year, he was privately married to Mrs. Johnson by Dr. Ashe, Bishop of Clogher. The marriage made no change in their mode of life; they lived in different houses as before; nor did she ever lodge in the Deanery but when Swift was seized with a fit of giddiness. " It would be difficult," says Lord Orrery, " to prove that they were ever afterwards together without a third person."

The Dean of St. Patrick lived in a private manner, known and regarded only by his friends, till, about the year 1720, he by a pamphlet recommended to the Irish the use, and consequently the improvement, of their manufacture. The tendency of the pamphlet being thought dangerous to the English trade, the printer was imprisoned; and the attention of the public being by this outrageous resentment turned upon the proposal, the author was by consequence made popular.

In 1723 died Mrs. Van Homrigh, a woman made unhappy by her admiration of wit, and ignominiously distinguished by the name of *Vanessa*. She was a young woman fond of literature, whom *Decanus* [the *Dean*], called *Cadenus* by

transposition of the letters, took pleasure in directing and instructing, till, from being proud of his praise, she grew fond of his person. Whatever might be his conduct to her, she thought herself neglected and died of disappointment.

The Dean made a tour, as related by Delany, to the south of Ireland, for about two months at this time to dissipate his thoughts, and give place to obloquy; and Stella retired to the house of a friend of the Dean's whom she much loved and honoured.

The great acquisition of esteem and influence was made by the "Drapier's Letters" in 1724. One Wood, of Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, had, as is said, by a present to the Dutchess of Munster, obtained a patent empowering him to coin one hundred and eighty thousand pounds of halfpence and farthings for the kingdom of Ireland, in which there was a great scarcity of copper coin. Swift, finding the metal which Wood had made use of much debased, wrote letters under the name of "M. B. Drapier," to shew the folly of receiving, and the mischief that must ensue by giving gold and silver for coin worth perhaps not a third part of its nominal value.

The nation was alarmed; the new coin was universally refused. Lord Carteret and the Privy Council published a proclamation offering three hundred pounds for discovering the author of the fourth letter. Swift had concealed himself from his printer, and trusted only his butler who transcribed the paper. The man immediately after the appearance of the proclamation strolled from the

house, and staid out all night, and part of the next day. There was reason to fear that he had betrayed his master for the reward; but he came home, and the Dean ordered him to put off his livery and leave the house; "for, says he, "I know that my life is in your power, and I will not bear, out of fear, either your insolence or negligence." The man excused his fault with great submission, and begged he might be confined in the house while it was in his power to endanger his master; but the Dean resolutely turned him out without taking further notice of him till the term of information expired, and then received him again. The integrity of the man, whose name was Blakeney, was rewarded with the situation of Verger of St. Patrick's.

From this time he was honoured by the populace as the champion, patron, and instructor of Ireland, and became amazingly popular. He was from this year the oracle of the traders, and the idol of the rabble. The pleasure, however, of his popularity was soon interrupted by domestic misery. Mrs. Johnson, whose conversation was to him the great softener of the ills of life, began in the year of the "Drapier's" triumph to decline; and two years afterwards was so wasted with sickness that her recovery was considered as hopeless. Swift was then in England, and had been invited by Lord Bolingbroke to pass the winter with him in France; but this call of calamity hastened him to Ireland, where perhaps his presence contributed to restore her to imperfect and tottering health.

She was now so much at ease that (1727) he returned to England, where he collected three volumes of miscellanies in conjunction with Pope. This important year sent likewise into the world "Gulliver's Travels," a production so new and strange that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. While Swift was enjoying the reputation of his new work, the news of the King's death arrived, and he kissed the hands of the new King and Queen three days after their accession.

Not long after he was seized by a fit of giddiness, and again heard of the sickness and danger of Mrs. Johnson. He then left Pope's house, as it seems with very little ceremony, and did not write to him till he found himself at Chester. He returned to a house of sorrow : poor Stella was sinking into the grave, and after a languishing delay of two months died in her forty-fourth year, January 28, 1728. How much he wished her life his papers tell us. He never mentioned her without a sigh.

The rest of his life was spent in Ireland, in a country to which not even power almost despotic, nor flattery almost idolatrous, could reconcile him. He tells Pope, in the decline of life, that he hopes once more to see him; *but if not, said he, we must part, as all human beings have parted.*

After the death of Stella he drove his acquaintance from his table. But he continued his attention to the public, and wrote from time to time such directions, admonitions, or censures, as the

various exigences of affairs, in his opinion, made proper. In a short poem on the Presbyterians, whom he always regarded with detestation, he bestowed one stricture upon Bettesworth, a lawyer eminent for his insolence to the clergy. Enraged, he went to Swift, and demanded whether he was the author of that poem. "Mr. Bettesworth," answered he, "I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers, who knowing my disposition to satire, advised me, that, if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should ask, *Are you the author of this paper?* I should tell him I was not the author; and therefore I tell you, Mr. Bettesworth, that I am not the author of these lines." Bettesworth was so little satisfied with this account, that he publicly professed his resolution of a corporal revenge; but the inhabitants of St. Patrick's district embodied themselves in the Dean's defence.

Swift was popular a while by another mode of beneficence. He set aside some hundreds to be lent in small sums to the poor, from five shillings to five pounds. He took no interest, and only required that, at repayment, a small fee should be given to the accomptant; but he required that the day of promised payment should be exactly kept. The day was often broken, and the loan was not repaid. He ordered his debtors to be sued. The clamour against him was loud, and he was therefore forced to drop his scheme.

His former asperity now continually increased and condemned him to solitude, and his resentment

of solitude sharpened his asperity. He was not, however, totally deserted; some men of learning, and some women of elegance, often visited him; and he wrote from time to time either verse or prose.

As his years increased, his fits of giddiness and deafness grew more frequent, and his deafness made conversation difficult; they grew likewise more severe till, in 1736, as he was writing a poem called the "Legion Club," he was seized with a fit so painful, and so long continued, that he never after thought it proper to attempt any work of thought or labour.

He was always careful of his money, and was therefore no liberal entertainer; but was less frugal of his wine than of his meat. When his friends of either sex came to him in expectation of a dinner, his custom was to give every one a shilling, that they might please themselves with their provision. At last he would refuse even a bottle of wine.

Having thus excluded conversation, and desisted from study, he had neither business nor amusement; for, having determined never to wear spectacles, he could make but little use of books in his latter years: his ideas therefore, being neither renovated by discourse nor increased by reading, wore gradually away, and left his mind vacant to the vexations of the hour, till at last his anger was heightened into madness.

He however permitted one book to be published, which had been the production of former years, "Polite Conversation," which appeared in 1738.

“The Directions for Servants” was printed soon after his death.

He grew more violent, and his mental powers declined till (1741) it was found necessary that legal guardians should be appointed to his person and fortune. His madness was compounded of rage and fatuity. The last face that he knew was that of Mrs. Whiteway, and her he ceased to know in a very little time. His meat was brought him cut into mouthfuls; but he would never touch it while the servant staid, and at last, after it had stood perhaps an hour, would eat it walking; for he continued his old habit, and was on his feet ten hours a day.

Next year (1742) he had an inflammation in his left eye, which swelled it to the size of an egg, with boils in other parts; he was kept long waking with the pain, and was not easily restrained by five attendants from tearing out his eye.

The tumour at last subsided; and a short interval of reason ensuing, in which he knew his physician and his family, gave hopes of his recovery; but in a few days he sunk into lethargic stupidity, motionless, heedless, and speechless. But it is said that after a year of total silence, when his housekeeper, on the 30th of November, told him that the usual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birth-day, he answered, *It is all folly; they had better let it alone.*

It is remembered, that he afterwards spoke now and then, or gave some intimation of a meaning; but at last sunk into perfect silence which continued

till about the end of October 1744, when, in his seventy-eighth year, he expired without a struggle.

The following observations respect his prose works, his person, and private habits.

“ His “Tale of a Tub,” says Johnson, “ has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed, or never exerted.”

“ In his other works is found an equable tenour of easy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in simplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seemed to be received rather by necessity than choice. He studied purity; and though perhaps all his strictures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. His sentences are never too much dilated or contracted.”

“ His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilized by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning

“ Of his duty as a Dean he was very observant. He managed the revenues of his church with exact œconomy; and it is said by Delany, that more money was under his direction laid out in repairs than had ever been in the same time since its first erection. Of his choir he was eminently careful; and, though he neither loved nor understood music, he took care that all the singers were well qualified.

“He came to church every morning, preached commonly in his turn, and attended the evening anthem, that it might not be negligently performed.

“He read the service *rather with a strong nervous voice than in a graceful manner; his voice was sharp and high-toned rather than harmonious.*

“He entered upon the clerical state with hope to excel in preaching, but complained that from the time of his political controversies *he could only preach pamphlets.*

“The person of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion, which, though he washed himself with oriental scrupulosity, did not look clear. He had a countenance sour and severe, which he seldom softened by any appearance of gaiety. He stubbornly resisted any tendency to laughter.

“To his domestics he was naturally rough; and a man of rigorous temper, with that vigilance of minute attention which his works discover, must have been a master that few could bear.

“He did not spare the servants of others. Once, when he dined alone with the Earl of Orrery, he said of one that waited in the room, *That man has, since we sat at table, committed fifteen faults.*

“In his œconomy he practised a peculiar and offensive parsimony without disguise or apology.

“He was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle; and if the purpose to which he destined his little accumulations be remembered, with his distribution of occasional charity, it will perhaps

appear, that he only liked one mode of expence better than another, and saved only that he might have something to give."

"He told stories with great felicity, and delighted in doing what he knew himself to do well. He was therefore captivated by the respectful silence of a steady listener, and told the same tale too often.

"He did not, however, claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had spoken a minute, to give room by a pause for any other speaker."

"In the poetical works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critic can exercise his powers. They are often humorous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occur a hard-laboured expression or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style, they consist of *proper words in proper places*.

"To divide this collection into classes, and shew how some pieces are gross, and some are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote often not to his judgment, but his humour.

"It was said in a preface to one of his Irish editions, that Swift had never been known to take a single thought from any writer ancient or modern.

This is not literally true; but perhaps no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his excellencies and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original."

GAY.

JOHN GAY, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manor of Goldsworthy in Devonshire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnstaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck. Being born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London in his youth and placed apprentice with a silk-mercator. It is said he was soon weary of either the restraint or servility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

The Dutchess of Monmouth in 1712 took Gay into her service as Secretary. Of the leisure which he had he made so good use that he published next year a poem on "Rural Sports," and inscribed it to Mr. Pope. Pope was pleased with the honour, and in consequence a friendship was formed between them, which lasted to their separation by death without any known abatement on either side.

Next year he published "The Shepherd's Week," six English pastorals. They were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations. In 1713 he brought a Comedy called "The

"Wife of Bath" upon the stage, but it received no applause. In the last year of Queen Anne's life he was made Secretary to the Earl of Clarendon, Ambassador to the court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party; but the Queen's death put an end to her favours.

On the arrival of the Princess of Wales he wrote a poem, and obtained so much notice, that both the Prince and Princess went to see his "What d'ye call it," a kind of mock tragedy, which was much favoured by the audience. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with "Three Hours after Marriage," a comedy written, as it is thought, by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot, but it was driven off the stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. In consequence of this last failure, he sunk into dejection. His friends tried to divert him. The Earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire; the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix, and in the following year Lord Harcourt invited him to his seat, where, during his visit, two rural lovers were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his poems by subscription with such success that he raised a thousand pounds, by which he was advised by Pope and Swift to purchase an annuity. In that disastrous year he had a present from young

Craggs of some South Sea stock. His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but this counsel was rejected; the profit and principal were lost, and he sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shewn particular tenderness, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, he wrote a tragedy called "The Captives," which he was invited to read before the Princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the Princess and her Ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, stumbled at a stool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty japan screen. The Princess started, the ladies screamed, and poor Gay, after all the disturbance, was still to read his play.

It was acted at Drury-lane in 1723, but with very little success. In 1726 he undertook to write a volume of "Fables" for the improvement of the young Duke of Cumberland, for which he is said to have been promised a reward.

Next year the Prince and Princess became King and Queen, and Gay was appointed Gentleman Usher to the Princess Louisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, his mind being fixed on higher promotion, and sent a message to the Queen that he was too old for the place. Great interest was made to gain him greater preferment; but solicitations, verses, and flatteries were thrown away.

His mind was now relieved from the pains of this neglect of the court by the unexampled success

of the "Beggar's Opera." This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian drama, was first offered to Cibber, and rejected; being then carried to Rich, it had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of *making Gay rich and Rich gay*. Pope says in one of his notes in the "Dunciad," that it was acted in London sixty-three nights without interruption, and renewed the next season with equal applause; it also spread into all the great towns of England; and was played in many places to the thirtieth and fortieth time; at Bath and Bristol fifty, &c. It made its progress into Wales, Scotland and Ireland, where it was performed twenty-four days successively.

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was by no means so great. Dr. Herring, Archbishop of Canterbury, among others, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished. This objection, or some other rather political than moral, obtained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of "Polly," it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit. The publication was so much favoured, that though the first part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the second.

He received yet another recompense for his

supposed hardship, in the affectionate attention of the Duke and Dutchess of Queensbury, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. The Duke, considering his want of œconomy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is supposed that the discountenance of the court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could overpower. He soon fell into his old distemper, an habitual colick, and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent fit at last seized him, and hurried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died the 4th of Dec. 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for some days unopened, because when he received it he was impressed with the preconception of some misfortune.

After his death, was published a second volume of Fables more political than the former. His opera of Achilles was acted, and the profits were given to two widow sisters, who inherited what he left as his lawful heirs, for he died without a will, though he had gathered three thousand pounds. There have also appeared under his name a comedy called the "Distrest Wife," and the "Rehearsal at Gotham," a piece of humour.

"As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critic remark, *of a*

lower order. He had not in any great degree the *mens divinior*, the dignity of genius. Much however must be allowed to the author of a new species of composition, though it be not of the highest kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera; a mode of comedy which at first was supposed to delight only by its novelty, but has now by the experience of half a century been found so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage."

"— His first performance, the "Rural Sports," is such as was easily planned and executed; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent. The "Fan" is one of those mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand; but which, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

"His Fables seem to have been a favourite work; for, having published one volume, he left another behind him."

"— They are however told with liveliness; the versification is smooth, and the diction, though now and then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

"To "Trivia" may be allowed all that it claims; it is sprightly, various, and pleasant.

"— Of his little poems the public judgment seems to be right; they are neither much esteemed, nor totally despised."

PITT.

CHRISTOPHER PITT was born in 1669 at Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed. He was, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance; and at his removal to New College in 1719 presented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary studies, a complete version of "Lucan's Poem," which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe. When he had resided at his college three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimperm in Dorsetshire (1722) by his relation, Mr. Pitt of Stratfieldsea in Hampshire, and, resigning his fellowship, continued at Oxford two years longer till he became Master of Arts (1724).

He probably about this time translated "Vida's Art of Poetry." In this translation he distinguished himself, both by its general elegance, and by the skilful adaptation of his numbers to the images expressed. He then retired to his living, where he passed the rest of his life, revered for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners.

At what time he composed his "Miscellany," published in 1727, it is not necessary to know. The success of his "Vida" animated him to a higher undertaking, and in his thirtieth year he published a version of the first book of the "Æneid." He some time afterwards added three or four more.

At last he gave us a complete "English Æneid," which, joined to that of Dryden's, Johnson declares to be *the two best translations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the same author.*

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deservedly conferred, for he left the world in 1748, and is buried at Blandford.

PARNELL.

THOMAS PARNELL was the son of a commonwealth's man, who at the Restoration left Congleton in Cheshire, and settling in Ireland, purchased an estate, which, with his lands in Cheshire, descended to the poet, who was born in Dublin in 1679, and, after the usual education of a Grammar-school, was at the age of thirteen admitted into the college, where in 1700 he became Master of Arts, and was the same year ordained a deacon, though under the canonical age, by a dispensation from the Bishop of Derry.

About three years afterwards he was made a priest; and in 1705, Dr. Ashe, the Bishop of Clogher, conferred upon him the Archdeaconry of Clogher. About the same time he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady, by whom he had two sons who died young, and a daughter who long survived him.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of Queen Anne's reign, Parnell was persuaded to

change his party, and was received by the new ministry as a valuable reinforcement. He was desirous to make himself conspicuous and to shew how worthy he was of high preferment; as he thought himself qualified to become a popular preacher, he displayed his elocution with great success in the pulpits of London: but the Queen's death, putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence; and Pope represents him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. This is imputed to the untimely death of a darling son; or, as others say, the loss of his wife, who died (1712) in the midst of his expectations.

He was now warmly recommended by Swift to Archbishop King, who gave him a Prebend in 1713, and in May 1716 presented him to the vicarage of Finglass, in the diocese of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Such notice from such a man may make one reasonably believe, that the vice of which he has been accused was either not gross or not notorious.

But his prosperity did not last long. His end, whatever was its cause, was now approaching. He enjoyed his preferment little more than a year; for in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, he died at Chester, on his way to Ireland.

Johnson informs us, that the above account of Parnell is extracted from Goldsmith's life of that poet.

As a writer, the great critic thus characterises him: "The Night-piece on Death" is indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to "Gray's Church-yard;"

but in my opinion Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment. He observes, that the story of the "Hermit" is in "More's Dialogues" and "Howell's Letters," and supposes it to be originally *Arabian*.

"Goldsmith has not taken any notice of the "Elegy to the Old Beauty," which is perhaps the meanest, nor of the "Allegory on Man," the happiest of Parnell's performances. The hint of the "Hymn to Contentment" I suspect to have been borrowed from Cleveland.

"The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension, or fertility of mind. Of the little that appears, still less is his own. His praise must be derived from the easy sweetness of his diction: in his verses there is *more happiness than pains*; he is sprightly without effort, and always delights though he never ravishes; every thing is proper, yet every thing seems casual. If there is some appearance of elaboration in the "Hermit," the narrative, as it is less airy, is less pleasing."

SAVAGE.

IN the year 1697 Anne Countess of Macclesfield, having lived for some time upon very uneasy terms with her husband, thought a public confession of adultery the most expeditious method of obtaining her liberty, and therefore declared that the child with which she was then pregnant, was begotten

by the Earl of Rivers. This, as may be easily imagined, made her husband no less desirous of a separation than herself, and accordingly on the third of March he was parted from his wife, a bill having passed for that purpose, although there was no divorce obtained in the spiritual court, and her fortune, which was very great, was repaid her. Having, as well as her husband, the liberty of making another choice, she in a short time married Colonel Bret.

While the Earl of Macclesfield was prosecuting this affair, his wife was, on the tenth of January 1697-8, delivered of a son, and the Earl of Rivers, considering him as his own, unfortunately left him to the care of his mother, who, whatever were her motives, no sooner was her son born, than she discovered a resolution of disowning him; and in a very short time removed him from her sight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom she directed to educate him as her own, and enjoined never to inform him of his true parents.

His mother could not indeed infect others with the same cruelty. As it was impossible to avoid the inquiries, which the curiosity or tenderness of her relations made after the child, she was obliged to give some account of the measures she had taken; and her mother, the Lady Mason, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office she was assisted by his godmother Mrs. Lloyd, who, while she lived, always

looked upon him with that tenderness which the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly necessary ; but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood ; for, though she kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loss by a legacy of 300 l. yet, as he had none to prosecute his claim, her will was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid.

He was, however, not wholly abandoned. The Lady Mason still continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a small grammar-school near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurse, without the least intimation that he had a claim to any other. While he was thus initiated in literature, his father the Earl of Rivers was seized with a distemper which in a short time put an end to his life. He had frequently, but in vain, inquired after his son ; but, being now on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a positive account of him. His mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined at least to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead ; which is perhaps the first instance of a lie invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself though he should lose it. The Earl could not suspect such an act of wickedness, and therefore bestowed upon some other person 6000 l.

which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

His mother now endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations; but, by what means is not known, this scheme was counteracted. Being however hindered from banishing him into another country, she formed soon after a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own. She therefore ordered him to be placed with a shoemaker in Holborn, that, after the usual time of trial, he might become his apprentice. It is generally reported, that this project was for some time successful, and that Savage was employed at the awl, when an unexpected discovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this period his nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, died; and it was natural for him to take care of those effects which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own; he therefore went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, amongst which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed. He was now no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother; and therefore without scruple applied to her as her son, and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness and attract her regard. But neither his letters, nor the interposition of his friends, made any impression

upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her—she ordered him to be excluded her house; but Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window, or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand. All his assiduity, however, was without effect, for he could neither soften her heart nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother. He was obliged therefore to seek some other means of support, and, having no profession, became by necessity an author.

Among the innumerable pamphlets to which the Bangorian controversy gave occasion, we find a poem by Savage against the Bishop. In his eighteenth year he offered to the stage a comedy borrowed from a Spanish plot, which was refused by the players, and was therefore given by him to Mr. Bullock, who, having more interest, made some slight alterations, and brought it upon the stage under the title of “Woman’s a Riddle,” but allowed the unhappy author no part of the profit.

Not discouraged however at his repulse, he wrote two years afterwards “Love in a Veil,” another comedy, borrowed likewise from the Spanish, but with little better success than before; for

though it was acted, yet it appeared so late in the year, that the author obtained no other advantage from it than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks, by whom he was pitied, caressed, and relieved. The first promoted his interest with the utmost zeal, and asserted, that "the inhumanity of his mother had given him a right to find every good man his father." That he enjoyed Sir Richard's confidence, may be known by the following story:

Sir Richard took him one morning in a chariot to Hyde Park Corner, where they stopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir Richard then informed him, that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and desired him to sit down and write for him. Savage wrote what the other dictated till the dinner was put upon the table. Savage was surprised at the meanness of the entertainment, and after some hesitation ventured to ask for wine, which Sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered to be brought. They then finished their dinner, and proceeded in their pamphlet, which they concluded in the afternoon. Sir Richard then told him that the pamphlet must be sold, as he had no money, before the reckoning could be discharged; and Savage was therefore obliged to go and offer their new production to sale for two guineas, which with some difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and composed the pamphlet for the purpose of paying his bill.

In the midst of his intentions of serving Savage

he was officiously informed that Savage had ridiculed him; by which he was so exasperated that he withdrew the allowance which he had contrived to pay him, and never afterwards admitted him to his house.

He was now again abandoned to his fortune, without any other friend than Mr. Wilks, a man who, whatever were his abilities as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered for his virtues. He took this unfortunate wit into his protection, and not only assisted him in any casual distresses, but continued an equal and steady kindness to the time of his death.

It is said, that by his interposition Savage once obtained from his mother fifty pounds, and a promise of one hundred and fifty more, which afterwards she refused to pay. Being thus obliged to depend upon the friendship of Mr. Wilks, he was consequently an assiduous frequenter of the theatres. A constant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the players, and, among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was so much pleased with his conversation, and touched with his misfortunes, that she allowed him a settled pension of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life regularly paid. At her death he endeavoured to shew his gratitude by wearing mourning as for a mother, and in his "Wanderer" he has taken an opportunity of celebrating her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her.

He had sometimes, by the kindness of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occasion he

often received uncommon marks of regard and compassion. But he had generally the mortification to hear that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried by which he might be cut off from the possibility of supporting life.

However, by the kindness of his friends, he was enabled to proceed, and he now endeavoured once more at dramatic poetry.—Having been unsuccessful in comedy, he resolved to try whether he should not be more fortunate in exhibiting a tragedy. The story which he chose for the subject was that of Sir Thomas Overbury, a story well adapted to the stage. Out of this story he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumstances in which he wrote it be considered, will afford at once an uncommon proof of strength of genius, and evenness of mind, of a serenity not to be ruffled, and an imagination not to be suppressed.

During a considerable part of the time in which he was employed upon this performance, he was without lodging, and often without meat; nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the street allowed him; there he used to walk and form his speeches, and afterwards step into a shop, beg for a few moments the use of the pen and ink, and write down what he had composed upon paper which he had picked up by accident.

Under these discouragements the tragedy was finished, and he sent it to Mr. Hill, with a short copy of verses, in which he desired his correction.

After several alterations, many of which Savage rejected, the play made its appearance in the summer when the chief actors had retired. Savage himself was admitted to play the part of Sir Thomas Overbury, by which he gained no great reputation, for neither his voice, look, nor gesture, were such as were expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of being reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the list when a copy of his tragedy was to be shewn to his friends.

Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the accumulated profits arose to an hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very large sum, having been never master of so much before.

Soon however his necessities returned, when Mr. Hill encouraged a subscription to a miscellany of poems, by publishing his story in the periodical paper of the "Plain Dealer" written by Hill and Bond, with some affecting lines. The subscriptions of those whom these papers should influence to patronize merit in distress, were directed to be left at Button's coffee-house; and Mr. Savage, going thither a few days afterwards, found to his surprise seventy guineas. To this Miscellany he wrote a preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty in a very uncommon strain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination which the success of his subscription probably produced.

Soon afterwards the death of the King furnished a general subject for a poetical contest, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried

the prize of honour from his competitors. He was now advancing in reputation, and, though frequently involved in very distressful perplexities, appeared however to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by a most unfortunate event.

On the 20th of November 1727 Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, to London; and accidentally meeting two gentlemen his acquaintances, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-house and sat drinking till it was late, it being, in no time of Mr. Savage's life, any part of his character to be the first of the company that desired to separate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the same house, but there was not room for the whole company, and therefore they agreed to ramble about the streets, and divert themselves with such amusements as might offer themselves till morning.

In their walk they happened unluckily to discover a light in Robinson's coffee-house near Charing-cross, and therefore went in. Merchant with some rudeness demanded a room, and was told there was a good fire in the next parlour which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. A quarrel ensued, swords were drawn, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage forced his way with Merchant out of the house, but they were both taken in a back court.

Being secured and guarded that night, they were in the morning carried before three justices, who committed them to the Gatehouse, from whence upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened the same day, they were removed in the night to Newgate. There they remained until the awful period of their trial came, which took up eight hours, when the jury determined that Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were guilty of murder, and Mr. Merchant, who had no sword, only of manslaughter.

Mr. Justice Page (who was then upon the bench) treated Savage with an insolence and severity which was usual with him, and when he had summed up the evidence endeavoured to exasperate the jury, as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:

“Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider that Mr. Savage is a very great man, a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?”

Savage attempted to remonstrate, and the judge ordered him to be taken from the bar by force.

Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to prison, where they were closely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds weight; four

days after they were sent back to the court and received sentence.

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life, but from the mercy of the crown, which was very earnestly solicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the story may obtain belief, was obstructed only by his mother. When the Queen was solicited for his pardon, and informed of the severe treatment which he had suffered from his judge, she answered, "that however unjustifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, she could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy who had been capable of entering his mother's house with an intent to murder her."

Horrid as it may seem, this atrocious calumny had been circulated by his mother without the smallest foundation in truth, in order to blast his hopes of obtaining the least mitigation of his punishment. Thus had he perished for an act committed in the hour of riot, and supported by the evidence of persons not much entitled to credit, had not justice and compassion procured him an advocate in the Countess of Hertford, who, hearing of his merit and his calamities, engaged in his support, and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty, exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct

could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity. The interposition of this lady was so successful, that he was soon after admitted to bail, and on the 9th of March 1728 pleaded the King's pardon.

During the time of his imprisonment, his trial, and the time which he lay under sentence of death, he behaved with great firmness and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the esteem of those who before admired him for his abilities. He was enabled by frequent presents, not only to support himself in prison, but to assist his associate in misfortune, Mr. Gregory, who was also released, and became afterwards collector of Antigua.

Some time after he had obtained his liberty, he met in the street a woman who had sworn with much malignity against him on his trial. She informed him that she was in distress, and, with a degree of confidence not easily attainable, desired him to relieve her. He, instead of insulting her misery, and taking pleasure in the calamities of one who had brought his life into danger, reproved her gently for her perjury, and, changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himself. This is an action which must be allowed of uncommon generosity, an act of complicated virtue. Compassion was indeed the distinguishing quality of Savage.

He was now at liberty, but was, as before, without any other support than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; sources by which he was sometimes very liberally supplied,

and which at other times were suddenly stopped. —In order to gain some settled income, he determined, after finding submission and entreaties fruitless, to attempt to extort it from his mother by rougher methods. He threatened to harrass her with lampoons, and to publish a copious narrative of her conduct, unless she consented to purchase an exemption from infamy by allowing him a pension.

This expedient proved successful. Lord Tyrconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promise to lay aside his design of exposing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred pounds a year. This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life; and for some time he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expences large, and his acquaintance numerous.

This interval of prosperity furnished him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature by contemplating life from its highest gradations to its lowest.—That he made exact observations on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greatest names, in a small pamphlet called “The Author to be Let.”

About this time, notwithstanding his avowed neutrality whith regard to party, he published a panegyric on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded by him with the trifling sum, at least to him at that period, of twenty guineas. In this gay part of his life (1729) while he was surrounded

by affluence and pleasure, he published "The Wanderer," a moral poem. This performance was always considered by himself as his master-piece; and when he asked his friend Mr. Pope his opinion of it, the latter told him, that he read it once over, and was not displeased with it, that it gave him more pleasure at the second perusal, and delighted him still more at the third. The copy was sold for so small a sum as ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned two, that the two last sheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had in his absence intrusted the correction to a friend who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

That he sold so valuable a performance for so small a price was not to be imputed to necessity, but to that intemperate desire of pleasure and habitual slavery to his passions, which involved him in many perplexities; he happened at that time to be engaged in the pursuit of some trifling gratification, and, being without money for the present occasion, sold his poem to the first bidder, and perhaps for the first price that was proposed, and probably would have been content with less if less had been offered.

He was now discarded by Lord Tyrconnel in consequence of frequently entertaining in his Lordship's house large parties of his riotous and licentious companions, who often indulged themselves in the utmost extravagance of merriment, and committed all the outrages of drunkenness.

Nor was this the only charge which Lord Tyrconnel brought against him: having given him a

collection of valuable books, stamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to see them in a short time exposed to sale upon stalls, it being usual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a small sum, to take his books to the pawnbroker. Savage recriminated in his turn, and it is thought that there were accumulated provocations on both sides.

During his continuance with the Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote "The Triumph of Health and Mirth," on the recovery of Lord Tyrconnel from a languishing illness. This performance is remarkable not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed.

He was now banished from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without prospect of finding quickly any other harbour. As prudence was not one of the virtues by which he was distinguished, he had made no provision against a misfortune like this. The difficulties to which Mr. Savage was therefore exposed were soon considerable, and he found no friend very willing to step forward to relieve them. He thought himself fully at liberty to expose the cruelty of his mother, being excluded from that subsistence which he thought not so much a favour as a debt, and about this time published "The Bastard," a poem remarkable for the vivacious sallies of thought in the beginning, where he makes a pompous enumeration of the imaginary advantages of base birth; and the pathetic sentiments at the end, where he recounts the real

calamities which he suffered by the crime of his parents. It was very favourably received, and editions of it were multiplied with unusual rapidity. It was dedicated, with "due reverence," to his mother, and was sold for a trivial sum to a bookseller.

The profits which he gained from the "Bastard" could not therefore alleviate the necessities which he experienced, which induced him to apply to the Queen, who, having once given him life, might enable him to support it. With this idea he published a short poem on her birth day, to which he gave the odd title of "Volunteer Laureat." Her majesty was highly pleased with the verses, sent him a bank-bill of fifty pounds, and a message by the Lord North and Guilford, that he had permission to write annually on the same subject, and that he should yearly receive the like present, till something better should be done for him. After this he was permitted to present one of his annual poems to her majesty, had the honour of kissing her hand, and met with the most gracious reception. The subsequent publication of his "Volunteer Laureat," therefore, procured him a reward of a regular remittance of the above sum, but he received no further extension of her majesty's bounty.

When the Princess Anne was married, he wrote a poem upon her departure, only, as he declared, "because it was expected from him." He never mentioned any advantage gained by this production.

When the dispute between the Bishop of London and the Chancellor was the chief topic of political

conversation, Mr. Savage took a decided part against the first, and published a new poem entitled "The Progress of a Divine," in which he conducts a profligate priest by all the gradations of wickedness from a poor curacy in the country, to the highest preferments in the church; and insinuates that this priest, thus accomplished, found at last a patron in the Bishop of London. For this work the Court of King's Bench was moved against him, and he was obliged to return an answer to a charge of obscenity, from which he cleared himself to the entire satisfaction of the court, in which Sir Philip Yorke presided, who dismissed the information with encomiums upon the purity and excellence of Mr. Savage's writings.

He was still in his usual exigencies, having no certain support but the pension allowed him by the Queen, which, though it might have kept an exact œconomist from want, was very far from being sufficient for Mr. Savage.

His conduct with regard to his pension was very particular. No sooner had he changed the bill, than he vanished from the sight of all his acquaintance, and lay for some time out of the reach of all the inquiries that friendship or curiosity could make after him; at length he appeared again, penniless as before, but never informed even those whom he seemed to regard most where he had been, nor was his retreat ever discovered.

After experiencing a disappointment in his hopes of receiving some place which was promised him by Sir Robert Walpole, he was determined to

address a poem to the Prince, who at that time was extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of several writers. After retiring for some time to Richmond, he produced a poem "On Public Spirit with regard to Public Works," and inscribed it to the Prince. Mr. Savage, having no friend upon whom he could prevail to present it to him, had no other method of attracting his observation than the publication of frequent advertisements, and therefore received no reward from his patron, however generous on other occasions. Here he again suffered another disappointment, which was increased by finding the public did not much countenance the work, for only seventy-two copies were sold. It was not considered in general as one of his happy efforts.

Thus his poem contributed nothing to the alleviation of his poverty, which, notwithstanding his fifty pounds a year were punctually paid, was such as few people could have supported with equal patience. No sooner had he received his pension, than he withdrew to his darling privacy as usual, from which he returned in a short time to his former distress, and for some part of the year generally lived by chance, eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintance, from which the meanness of his dress often excluded him.

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and

sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expences of those receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.

These distresses, however afflictive, never dejected him, or made him submit to be treated by any person, however exalted in situation, otherwise than as an equal. Once, when he was without a lodging, meat, or clothes, one of his friends left a message, that he desired to see him about nine in the morning. Savage knew that his intention was to assist him; but he was very much disgusted that he should presume to prescribe the hour of his attendance, and, it is thought, refused to visit him and rejected his kindness.

In the midst of poverty, and the neglect and contempt which it drew upon him, he had recourse to the usual practice of writers, and published proposals for printing his works by subscription, which, although not generally successful, were encouraged by some of the nobility. He related of the Duke of Chandos particularly, that upon receiving his proposals, he sent him ten guineas.

But the money which his subscriptions afforded him was not less volatile than that which he received from his other schemes; whenever a subscription was paid him, he went to a tavern; and as money so collected is necessarily received in small sums, he never was able to send his poems to the press, but for many years continued his

solicitation, and squandered whatever he obtained. Finding, after repeated trials, the impossibility of his being able to print the volume together, he, at last, determined to divide his works into weekly or monthly numbers, that the profits of the first might supply the expences of the next.

Thus he spent his time in mean expedients, and tormenting suspense, living for the greatest part in the fear of prosecutions from his creditors, and consequently sculking in obscure parts of the town.

His life, unhappy as it may be already imagined, was yet embittered in 1738 with new calamities. He had long entertained expectations of preferment from the Queen, but her death at once destroyed them. This was followed by the loss of his pension, although he wrote on the occasion of the Queen's decease one of the finest poetical funeral panegyrics that the death of princes has produced.

Such were his misfortunes, which yet he bore not only with decency, but with cheerfulness; nor was his gaiety clouded even by his last disappointments, though he was in a short time reduced to the lowest degree of distress, and often wanted both lodging and food. At this time he gave another instance of the insurmountable obstinacy of his spirit: his clothes were worn out, and he received notice that at a coffee-house some clothes and linen were left for him: the person who sent them did not, it is thought, inform him to whom he was to be obliged, and neglected some trifling ceremonies, which Mr. Savage so much resented,

that he refused the present, and declined to enter the house till the clothes that had been designed for him were taken away.

His distress was now publicly known, and his friends, therefore, thought it proper to concert some measures for his relief. The scheme proposed was, that he should retire into Wales, and receive an allowance of fifty pounds a year, to be raised by a subscription, on which he was to live privately in a cheap place, without aspiring any more to affluence, or having any farther care of reputation.

This offer Mr. Savage gladly accepted, though with intentions very different from those of his friends; for they proposed that he should continue an exile from London for ever, and spend all the remaining part of his life at Swansea; but he designed only to take the opportunity of retreating for a short time, that he might prepare for the stage a second tragedy upon the story of Sir Thomas Overbury, and his other works for the press, and then return to London, to exhibit his play, and live upon the profits of his own labour.

While the scheme of his friends was ripening, they directed him to take a lodging in the liberties of the Fleet, that he might be secure from his creditors, and sent him every Monday a guinea, which he commonly spent before the next morning, and trusted, after his usual manner, the remaining part of the week to the bounty of fortune.

After waiting for some time in this situation, a subscription was at length raised, which did not amount to fifty pounds a year. Mr. Savage however

was satisfied, and willing to retire, was convinced that the allowance, though scanty, would be more than sufficient for him, being now determined to commence a rigid œconomist, and to live according to the exactest rules of frugality.

Full of these salutary resolutions, he left London in July 1739. — He was furnished with fifteen guineas, and informed that they would be sufficient, not only for the expence of his journey, but for his support in Wales for some time. He promised a strict adherence to his maxims of parsimony, and went away in the stage coach.

In fourteen days after his departure arrived a letter in which he sent them word, that he was yet upon the road, and without money, and that therefore he could not proceed without a remittance. They then sent him what was remaining in their hands of the first collection, with which he was enabled to reach Bristol, from whence he was to go to Swansea by water.

After some stay at Bristol he retired to Swansea, where he lived about a year, continually complaining of the conduct of his friends in London, and at last irritated many of them so much that they withdrew their contributions, which reduced his salary to very little more than twenty pounds a year, which he said was scarcely equal to the necessaries of life. This diminution of his promised allowance was certainly a hardship, and his resentment, in consequence, was such that he broke off all correspondence with most of his contributors.

Having finished his tragedy, he was determined to return to London, and with that intention he went to Bristol, where he was invited to stay by those people with whom he had made himself acquainted before. He was not only caressed and kindly treated by them, but they also made a collection for him of about thirty pounds, with which it had been happy if he had immediately departed for London; but remaining there so long that his friends began to be tired of him, he could not afterwards procure a sum sufficient to defray the expences of his journey.

While he was spending the day in contriving a scheme for the morrow, distress stole upon him by imperceptible degrees. His friends now almost entirely deserted him, and, to complete his misery, he was pursued by the bailiffs for small debts which he had contracted. He was therefore compelled to elude their search. His custom was to lie in bed the greatest part of the day, and to go out in the dark with the utmost privacy, and, after having paid a visit, return again before morning to his lodging, which was in the garret of an obscure inn.

He now suffered the utmost extremities of poverty, and often fasted so long that he was seized with faintness, and had lost his appetite, not being able to bear the smell of meat till the action of his stomach was restored by a cordial. In this distress he received a remittance of five pounds from London, with which he provided himself a decent coat, and determined to set out for that

place, but unhappily spent his money at a favourite tavern. Thus was he again confined to Bristol, where he was every day hunted by bailiffs, until on the night of the tenth of January 1742-3, he was, at his return to his lodgings, arrested for a debt of about eight pounds, and conducted to the house of a sheriff's officer, with three pence halfpenny in his pocket.

He continued five days at this place in hopes that he should be able to procure bail, and avoid the necessity of going to prison — But his friends finding that to give bail and pay the debt was the same thing, all refused to assist him, and he was at length removed to Newgate. It ought however here to be stated, that he was enabled to support the expence of the spunging house by the generosity of Mr. Nash at Bath, who sent him five guineas.

It is observable, that in these various scenes of misery he was always disengaged and cheerful. But in this confinement he suffered fewer hardships than he had been accustomed to undergo in the greatest part of his life, owing to the humanity and kind treatment of M. Dagg, the keeper of the prison. Mr. Savage very frequently received visits, and sometimes presents, from his acquaintance; but although such conduct endeared to him those people, still he entertained no advantageous ideas of the inhabitants of Bristol, and thought he could not more properly employ himself in prison, than in writing a poem called "London and Bristol delineated." This was thought by many an act

of ingratitude as well as imprudence, considering the former treatment he had experienced, and the situation he was then in at that place. When the work was finished, he wrote to his friend (the only one among his subscribers with whom he corresponded, and who yet continued to remit him 20l. a year) and informed him of his intention of publishing it. The gentleman, surprised at his resolution, endeavoured to dissuade him from it; but Savage treated his advice with the utmost contempt. Being now fully determined to hasten the publication, at last the hour came when all his schemes were suddenly destroyed.

Some days after he had received a letter from his friend Mr. Pope containing a charge of very atrocious ingratitude, which he answered by a protestation of his innocence, he was seized with a pain in his back and side, which, as it was not violent, was not suspected to be dangerous; but, growing daily more languid and dejected, on the twenty-fifth of July he confined himself to his room, and a fever seized his spirits. The symptoms grew every day more formidable, but his condition did not enable him to procure any assistance. The last time that the keeper saw him was on July the 31st, 1743, when Savage, seeing him at his bedside, said, with an uncommon earnestness: "I have something to say to you, Sir;" but, after a pause, moved his hand in a melancholy manner, and, finding himself unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, said, "'Tis gone!" The keeper soon after left him, and the next morning he

died. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Peter, at the expence of the keeper, after six months confinement.

“ He was (says Dr. Johnson, who was intimate with him) of a middle stature, of a thin habit of body, a long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect; of a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners. His walk was slow, and his voice tremulous and mournful—He was easily excited to smiles, but very seldom provoked to laughter.

“ His mind was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgment was accurate, his apprehension quick, and his memory so tenacious that he was frequently observed to know what he had learned from others in a short time better than those by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combination of circumstances, which few would have regarded at the present time, but which the quickness of his apprehension impressed upon him. He had the peculiar felicity that his attention never deserted him; he was present to every object, and regardful of the most trifling occurrences. He had the art of escaping from his own reflections, and accommodating himself to every new scene.”

“ His method of life particularly qualified him for conversation of which he knew how to practise all the graces. He was never vehement or loud, but at once modest and easy, open and respectful;

his language was vivacious and elegant, and equally happy upon grave or humorous subjects."

"With regard to his œconomy nothing can be added to the relation of his life. He appeared to think himself born to be supported by others, and dispensed from all necessity of providing for himself."

"His temper was, in consequence of the dominion of his passions, uncertain and capricious; he was easily engaged, and easily disgusted; but he is accused of retaining his hatred more tenaciously than his benevolence.

"He was compassionate both by nature and principle, and always ready to perform offices of humanity; but when he was provoked (and very small offences were sufficient to provoke him) he would prosecute his revenge with the utmost acrimony till his passion had subsided. His friendship was therefore of little value."

"He could not easily leave off when he had once begun to mention himself or his works; nor ever read his verses without stealing his eyes from the page to discover in the faces of his audience how they were affected with any favourite passage."

"As an author therefore, and he now ceases to influence mankind in any other character, if one piece which he had resolved to suppress be excepted, he has very little to fear from the strictest moral or religious censure. And though he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critic, it must however be acknowledged that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical, and

what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air, which has no resemblance of any foregoing writer; that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with success, because what was nature in Savage would in another be affectation. It must be confessed that his descriptions are striking, his images animated, his fictions justly imagined, and his allegories artfully pursued; that his diction is elevated, though sometimes forced, and his numbers sonorous and majestic, though frequently sluggish and encumbered. Of his style the general fault is harshness, and its general excellence is dignity; of his sentiments the prevailing beauty is sublimity, and uniformity the prevailing effect."

THOMSON.

JAMES THOMSON, the son of a minister well esteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam in the shire of Roxburgh, of which his father was pastor. His mother, whose name was Hume, inherited as co-heiress a portion of a small estate. The revenue of a parish in Scotland is seldom large; and it was probably in commiseration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomson supported his family, having nine children, that Mr. Riccarton a neighbouring minister, discovering in James uncommon promises

of future excellence, undertook to superintend his education and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the school of Jedburgh, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of "Autumn;" but was not considered by his master as superior to common boys, though in those early days he amused his patron and his friends with poetical compositions, with which he so little pleased himself, that on every new year's day he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From school he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not resided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raised upon her little estate what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to see her son rising into eminence.

He now determined to visit London, and cultivate with new diligence his blossoms of poetry, which had occasionally bursted forth to the admiration of many. At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, and had recommendations to several persons of consequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he passed along the streets with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was stolen from him.

His first want was of a pair of shoes. For the supply of all his necessities his whole fund was his "Winter," which for a time could find no purchaser,

till, at last, Mr. Millar was persuaded to buy it at a low price; and this low price he had for some time reason to regret; but a Mr. Whatley, happening to turn his eye upon it, was so delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellencies. Thomson obtained likewise the notice of Aaron Hill. The poem was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, who, through the exertions of Hill, made the author a present of twenty guineas.

Thomson's credit was now high, and every day brought him more friends—The next year (1727) he distinguished himself by three publications; of "Summer," in pursuance of his plan; of "a Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton," and of "Britannia," a kind of poetical invective against the ministry. His "Summer" he was desirous to dedicate to Lord Binning, in whose family he had been sometimes entertained, but his Lordship advised him to address it to Mr. Doddington.

"Spring" was published next year with a dedication to the Countess of Hertford. "Autumn," the season to which the "Spring" and "Summer" are preparatory, still remained unsung, and was delayed till he published (1730) his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of "Sophonisba," which raised considerable expectation, but it had upon the stage no unusual degree of success. He was, not long afterwards, sent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the Chancellor. In his travels on the continent he found, or fancied, so many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he resolved to write a

very long poem, in five parts, upon "Liberty." While he was busy on the first book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomson, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of Secretary of the Briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Two years were spent upon this poem, and the author congratulated himself upon it as his noblest work; but none of his performances were so little regarded.

He however now lived in ease and plenty, and seems for a while to have suspended his poetry; but he was soon called back to labour by the death of the Chancellor, for his place then became filled by another person. He now relapsed to his former indigence; but the Prince of Wales, by the influence of Lyttleton, procured him a pension of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1738) the tragedy of "Agamemnon." It struggled with such difficulty through the first night that Thomson, coming late to his friends with whom he was to sup, excused his delay by telling them how the sweat of his distress had so disordered his wig that he could not come till he had been refitted by a barber. He so interested himself in his new drama, that, it is said, as he sat in the upper gallery he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frightened him to silence. About this time the act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of *Gustavus Vasa*, a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, and the

next was the refusal of "Edward and Eleonora," offered by Thomson. He was soon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the masque of "Alfred," which was acted before the prince at Cliefden-house.

His next work (1745) was "Tancred and Sigismunda," the most successful of all his tragedies. His friend Mr. Lyttleton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of Surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands, from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred pounds a year.

The last piece that he lived to publish was the "Castle of Indolence," which was many years under his hand, but was at last finished with great accuracy. The first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury that fills the imagination.

He was now at ease, but was not long to enjoy it; for, by taking cold on the water between London and Kew, he caught a disorder, which, with some careless exasperation, ended in a fever that put an end to his life, August 27th, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond without an inscription; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

"Thomson was of stature above the middle size, *and more fat than bard beseems*; of a dull countenance, and a gross uninviting appearance; silent in mingled company, but cheerful among select friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved.

"He left behind him the tragedy of "Coriolanus," which was, by the zeal of his patron Sir George

Lyttleton, brought upon the stage for the benefit of his family, and recommended by a prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomson in some intimacy, spoke in such a manner as shewed him *to be*, on that occasion, *no actor*. The commencement of this acquaintance is very honourable to Quin, who is reported to have delivered Thomson, then known to him only for his genius, from an arrest, by a very considerable present; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendship is not always the sequel of obligation. By this tragedy a considerable sum was raised, of which part discharged his debts, and the rest was remitted to his sisters."

"— The benevolence of Thomson was fervid, but not active; he would give, on all occasions, what assistance his purse could supply; but the offices of intervention or solicitation he could not conquer his sluggishness sufficiently to perform."

"— Among his peculiarities was a very unskilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or solemn composition. He was once reading to Doddington, who, being himself a reader eminently elegant, was so much provoked by his odd utterance, that he snatched the paper from his hand, and told him that he did not understand his own verses."

"— As a writer he is entitled to one praise of the highest kind; his mode of thinking and of expressing his thoughts is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of

Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life with the eye which nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute."

"—The great defect of the "Seasons" is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy."

"—His diction is in the highest degree florid and luxuriant, such as may be said to be to his images and thoughts *both their lustre and their shade*, such as invest them with splendour through which perhaps they are not easily discerned. It is too exuberant, and sometimes may be charged with filling the ear more than the mind.

"— "Liberty," when it appeared, I tried to read, and soon desisted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praise or censure."

COLLINS.

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester the twenty-fifth of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733 admitted scholar of Winchester college, where he was educated by Dr. Burton.

He first courted the notice of the public by some verses "To a Lady weeping," published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In 1740 he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College; but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a Commoner of Queen's College, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was in about half a year elected a *demy* Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a Bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the university.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He designed many works, but his great fault was irresolution, or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning, but probably not a page of it was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them.

Dr. Johnson gives us an account of his being one day admitted to Collins, when he was immured by a bailiff that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who on the credit of a translation of "Aristotle's Poetics," which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. Soon after his uncle Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about 2000*l.* a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to

exhaust. The above money was then repaid, and the translation neglected.

The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. Those clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunatics, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death in 1756 came to his relief.

It is remarkable, that Johnson in his criticism on this writer never mentions the celebrated "Ode on the Passions." He concludes what he says thus :

— " His diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure. ¹ "

¹ Mr. Hayley differed greatly in opinion with Dr. Johnson as to Collins's poetical talents as will be seen in

Y O U N G.

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham near Winchester in June 1681. He was the son of Edward Young, at that time Fellow of Winchester College and Rector of Upham. In September 1682 the poet's father was collated to the Prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the Church of Sarum, by Bishop Ward. On the childishness of Ward, his duties were necessarily performed by others. In consequence of the prebendary's merit and reputation, he was appointed Chaplain to King William

the following excellent epitaph on a monument erected to his memory at Chichester in 1795 :

Ye who the merits of the dead revere,
 Who hold misfortune sacred, *genius* dear,
 Regard this tomb, where COLLINS' hapless name
 Solicits kindness with a double claim.
 Tho' nature gave him, and though science taught,
The fire of fancy, and the reach of thought,
 Severely doom'd to penury's extreme,
 He pass'd in madd'ning pain life's sev'rish dream —
 While *rays of genius* only serv'd to show
 The thick'ning horror and exalt his woe.
 Ye walls, that echoed to his frantic moan,
 Guard the due records of this grateful stone;
 Strangers to him, enamour'd of his lays,
 This fond memorial to his talents praise :
 For this the ashes of a bard require,
Who touch'd the tend'rest notes of Pity's lyre ;
Who join'd pure faith to strong poetic pow'rs,
 Who in reviving reason's lucid hours
 Sought on one book his troubled mind to rest,
 And rightly deem'd the Book of God the best.

and Queen Mary, and preferred to the Deanery of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, says he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late Queen, who honoured him by standing godmother to the poet. The dean died at Sarum, after a short illness (1705) in the sixty-third year of his age.

He had placed his son upon the foundation at Winchester College, where he had himself been educated. At this school Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birth-day, the period at which those upon the foundation are superannuated.

On the thirteenth of October 1703 he was entered an independent member of New College, Oxford, and in the same year he was nominated to a low fellowship at All Souls.

On the twenty-third of April 1714 he took his degree of Bachelor of Civil Laws, and his Doctor's degree on the tenth of June 1719. It is certain that his college was proud of him no less as a scholar than as a poet, for in 1716, when the foundation of Codrington Library was laid, he was appointed to speak the Latin Oration. Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works. It is said that in the early part of his life he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became. It is certain that he was not ashamed to be patronized by the infamous Wharton.

His first poetical flight was when Queen Anne added in one day so many to the number of peers. In order to reconcile the people to one at

least of the new lords, he published in 1712 "An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne," in which he pours out his panegyric with the extravagance of a young man who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted, and in which he endeavours to reconcile the public to the late peace.

When Addison published "Cato," in 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a commendatory copy of verses. On the appearance of his "Poem on the Last Day," Addison did not return Young's compliment. It was inscribed to the Queen in a dedication replete with encomiums, but she was soon called away from this lower world to a place where human praise or human flattery are of little consequence. Before her death "The Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love," was sent into the world; and after it Young published a poem on the occasion of his Majesty's accession to the throne.

Thomas Wharton, Esq. afterwards Marquis of Wharton, when he became enobled, did not drop the poet, as he had been intimate with his father. In him, during the short time he lived, Young found a patron, and in his dissolute descendant a friend and a companion¹. The Marquis died in April 1715. The beginning of the next year the young Marquis set out upon his travels, from which

¹ See a curious law case between the Dr. and the Marquis's executors, stated at length in the Modern Reports, vol. IX, page 412. Mr. Leach's edition, 8vo. 1796.

he returned in about a twelvemonth. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland; and Young having paid that country a visit, it is supposed that he went at this time, when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron.

The tragedy of "Busiris" was brought out at Drury Lane in 1719, dedicated to the Duke of Newcastle. This was followed in the year 1721 by "The Revenge," which was inscribed to the Duke of Wharton, who, though abandoned, and highly profligate, still proved himself on many occasions the liberal friend and patron of Young. His Grace discovered in our poet talents for oratory, as well as poetry, and supported him in an attempt to get into Parliament for *Cirencester*. This opinion of his powers was well founded; for, when he afterwards took orders, he became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery.

In 1719 appeared a "Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job."

His "Satires" were the next, and the best information to be had respecting their dates points out the appearance of the first to have been about 1725. The last was certainly finished in the beginning of the year 1726, although the fifth, "On Women," was not published till 1727, and the sixth not till 1728. When he gathered them into one publication, he gave them the title of "The Universal Passion," and it is said this poem procured him no less a sum than three thousand

pounds. In 1726 "The Instalment" made its appearance, addressed to Sir Robert Walpole.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with "Ocean, an Ode." Prefixed to the original publication were an "Ode to the King, Pater Patriæ," and an "Essay on Lyric Poetry." About this time he entered into orders, and in April 1728, soon after he put on the gown, he was appointed Chaplain to George the Second. The tragedy of "The Brothers," which was already in rehearsal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. Not long after he took orders he published in prose "A true Estimate of Human Life;" and a Sermon preached before the House of Commons 1729, on the Martyrdom of King Charles, entitled "An Apology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Government."

But his old friends the Muses were not forgotten. In 1730 he sent into the world "Imperium Pelagi," a Naval Lyric written in Imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occasioned by his Majesty's return from Hanover September 1729, and the succeeding Peace." Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he published two Epistles to Pope concerning the authors of the age, 1730. In July 1730 he was presented by his college to the Rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In April 1732 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and widow of Colonel Lee.

The next production of his Muse was "The Sea-Piece," in two Odes. In 1734 he published "The Foregoing Address occasioned by the British Fleet

and the Posture of Affairs, written in the Character of a Sailor." This production is inserted in the four volumes he published himself; but many others he thought beneath him, and therefore omitted them.

Of his wife, who brought him one child, Frederick, he was deprived in 1740. She was soon followed by an amiable daughter, the child of her former husband, who was just married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife. To the sorrow Young felt at these losses we are indebted for his "Night Thoughts," written after he was sixty years of age.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in these productions of every thing which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politics. In 1745 he wrote "Reflections on the Public Situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle." In 1753, when "The Brothers" had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. He determined that the profits should go to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; but the play failing, he made up the sum he intended, which was a thousand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a prose publication entitled, "The Centaur not Fabulous, in six Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue." After some trifling productions in 1762, a short time before his death he published "Resignation," and in April 1765, at an age to which few attain (84) a period was put to his life.

“Of Young’s poems it is difficult to give any general character, for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth, and sometimes rugged; his style is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt; sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise.

— “He was not one of the writers whom experience improves, and who, observing their own faults, become gradually correct. His poem of the “*Last Day*,” his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured at or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and few are mean, yet the whole is languid.”

— “His story of “*Jane Grey*” was never popular. It is written with elegance enough, but *Jane* is too heroic to be pitied.

“The “*Universal Passion*” is indeed a very great performance. It is said to be a series of epigrams; but if it be, it is what the author intended; his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed sentences; and his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth. His characters are often selected with discernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations are often happy, and his reflections often just. His species of satire is between those of Horace and of Juvenal; he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the

morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images: he plays, indeed, only on the surface of life, he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits please only when they surprise."

— "In his "Night Thoughts" he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by regard to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to a Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent, and endless diversity."

"Of "Resignation," Dr. Johnson says, "there is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in his highest vigour."

Of his Plays we have the following character: "In "Busiris" there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination; but the pride of Busiris is such as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life, to raise either grief, terror, or indignation. The "Revenge" appears much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore

keeps possession of the stage: the first design seems suggested by "Othello;" but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so introduced, and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of "The Brothers" I may be allowed to say nothing, since nothing was ever said of it by the public."

"It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or relation."

"His versification is his own; neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any resemblance to those of former writers."

"His verses are formed by no certain model; for he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have any direction but from his own ear. But with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet."

SHENSTONE.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, the son of Thomas Shenstone and Anne Pen, was born in November 1714, at the Leasowes in Hales-Owen, one of those insulated districts, which in the division of the kingdom was appended, for some reason not now discoverable, to a distant county, and which, though surrounded by Warwickshire and Worcestershire, belongs to Shropshire, though perhaps thirty miles distant from any other part of it.

He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of the "Schoolmistress" has delivered to posterity—As he grew older, he went for a while to the grammar-school in Hales-Owen, and was placed afterwards with Mr. Crumpton, an eminent schoolmaster at Solihul, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress. In June 1721 he was deprived of his father and in 1726 of his grandfather, when he, together with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, was left to the care of his grandmother who managed the estate.

From school he was sent in 1732 to Pembroke College in Oxford.—Here he continued his name for ten years, though he took no degree. After the first four years he put on the civilian's gown, but without shewing any intention to engage in the profession. About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the Reverend Mr. Dolman of Broome in Staffordshire.

At Oxford he employed himself upon English poetry, and in 1737 published a small miscellany without his name. He then wandered about to acquaint himself with life, and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of public resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published 1740 his "Judgment of Hercules," addressed to Mr. Lyttleton—This was two years afterwards followed by the "Schoolmistress."

Mr. Dolman died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon himself. At this period

began his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition for rural elegance. In time his expences brought him into difficulties, for he spent his estate in adorning it, and probably his death was hastened by his anxieties.

He died at the Leasowes, of a putrid fever, February 11, 1763, and was buried by the side of his brother in the Church yard of Hales-Owen. He was never married.

“ His poems consist of elegies, odes, and ballads, humourous sallies, and moral pieces.

“ His conception of an elegy he has in his preface very judiciously and discriminately explained. It is, according to his account, the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of slight ornaments. His compositions suit not ill to this description.”

“ — The lines are sometimes such as elegy requires, smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant; his diction is often harsh, improper and affected; his words ill-coined, or ill-chosen, and his phrases unskilfully inverted.

“ The lyric poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, “ Rural Elegance ” has some right to be excepted.”

“ — Of the rest I cannot think any excellent; the “ Skylark ” pleases me the best, which has however more of the epigram than of the ode.

“ But the four parts of his “ Pastoral Ballad ”

demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is pastoral. An intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the *kids*, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice; for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the grossness of the country life. His stanzas seem to have been chosen in imitation of Rowe's "Despairing Shepherd."

"In the first part are two passages, to which if any mind denies sympathy it has no acquaintance with love or nature."

Here Johnson introduces the verse beginning

I priz'd every hour that went by,
&c. &c.

and the two subsequent verses.

"In the second this passage has its prettiness, though it be not equal to the former:"

I have found out a gift for my fair,
&c. &c.

with the remainder of the verse.

"In the third he mentions the common places of amorous poetry with some address:"

'Tis with mock passion to glow;
&c. &c.

to the end of the verse.

"In the fourth I find nothing better than this natural strain of hope:"

Alas! from the day that we met,
and so to the end of the verse.

After speaking of a few smaller pieces, Dr. Johnson concludes his criticisms thus:

“The Schoolmistress,” of which I know not what claim it has to stand among the moral works, is surely the most pleasing of Shenstone’s performances. The adoption of a particular style, in light and short compositions, contributes much to the increase of pleasure; we are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the sentiments, of the original author in the style, and between them the mind is kept in perfect employment.

“The general recommendation of Shenstone is easiness and simplicity; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety. Had his mind been better stored with knowledge, whether he could have been great I know not, he could certainly have been agreeable.”

AKENSIDE.

MARK AKENSIDE was born the 9th of November 1721 at Newcastle upon Tyne. His father, Mark, was a butcher of the Presbyterian sect; his mother’s name was Mary Lumsden. He received the first part of his education at the grammar-school of Newcastle, and was afterwards instructed by M. Wilson, who kept a private academy.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify himself for the office of a

Dissenting Minister; but this he soon laid aside, and determined to study physic.

He was one of those poets who have felt very early the motions of genius, and one of those students who have very early stored their memories with sentiments and images. Many of his performances were produced in his youth, and his greatest work, "The Pleasures of Imagination," appeared in 1744.

In 1741 he went to Leyden in pursuit of medical knowledge; and three years afterwards (May 16, 1744) became Doctor of Physic. Soon after his return from abroad (1745) he published his first collection of Odes, and was impelled by an outrageous zeal for patriotism to write a very acrimonious epistle to Pulteney, whom he stigmatizes, under the name of *Curio*, as the betrayer of his country.

He was now known as a poet, but was still to make his way as a physician; and would perhaps have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr. Dyson, with an ardour of friendship that has not many examples, allowed him 300l. a year. Thus supported, he advanced gradually in medical reputation, but never attained any great extent of practice, or eminence of popularity.

He died June 23, 1770, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

"His great work is the "Pleasures of Imagination," a performance which, published as it was at the age of twenty-three, raised expectations which were not afterwards very amply satisfied. It

has undoubtedly a just claim to very particular notice, as an example of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquisitions, of a young mind stored with images, and much exercised in combining and comparing them."

" — The subject is well chosen, as it includes all images that can strike or please, and thus comprises every species of poetical delight. The only difficulty is in the choice of examples and illustrations; and it is not easy in such exuberance of matter to find the middle point between penury and satiety. The parts seem artificially disposed, with sufficient coherence, so as that they cannot change their places without injury to the general design.

" His images are displayed with such luxuriance of expression that they are hidden, like Butler's moon, by a *veil of light*; they are forms fantastically lost under superfluity of dress. *Pars minima est ipsa puella sui*. The words are multiplied till the sense is hardly perceived; attention deserts the mind and settles in the ear. The reader wanders through the gay diffusion, sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted but, after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and laid hold on nothing.

" To his versification justice requires that praise should not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is perhaps superior to any other writer of blank verse."

" His diction is certainly so far poetical as it is not prosaic, and so far valuable as it is not common.

He is to be commended as having fewer artifices of disgust than most of his brethren of the blank song."

Of his other poetry Dr. Johnson speaks slightly.

LYTTLETON.

GEORGE LYTTLETON, the son of Sir Thomas Lyttleton, of Hagley in Worcestershire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eton, where he was much distinguished among his school-fellows. From Eton he went to Christ Church College at Oxford, where he retained the same reputation of superiority, and displayed his abilities to the public in a poem, on "Blenheim." He was a very early writer both in verse and prose. His "Progress of Love" and his "Persian Letters" were both written when he was very young.

He staid not long at Oxford, for in 1728 he began his travels, and saw France and Italy. When he returned, he obtained a seat in Parliament, and soon distinguished himself among the most eager opponents of Sir Robert Walpole. For many years the name of George Lyttleton was seen as an oppositionist in every account of every debate in the House of Commons.

The Prince of Wales, being (1737) driven from the court, opened his arms to the opponents of the ministry. Mr. Lyttleton was made his secretary, Mallet, his under-secretary, and Thomson had a pension.

While Lyttleton thus stood conspicuous in the first rank of opposition, he married (1741) Miss Lucy Fortescue of Devonshire, by whom he had a son, the late Lord Lyttleton, and two daughters. He was unfortunately deprived of her in about five years afterwards, and he solaced his grief by writing a long poem to her memory.

He did not however condemn himself to perpetual solitude and sorrow, for after a while he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich; but the experiment was unsuccessful.

At length, after a long struggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were distributed among his conquerors. Lyttleton was made (1744) one of the Lords of the Treasury, and from that time was engaged in supporting the schemes of the ministry.

In 1751 his father died, when he inherited a baronet's title with a large estate. He still continued his exertions in Parliament, and was made (1754) Cofferer and Privy Counsellor: this place he exchanged next year for the great office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The subsequent year his curiosity led him into Wales, and soon after he published his "Dialogues of the Dead."

When, in the latter part of the last reign, the inauspicious commencement of the war made the dissolution of the ministry unavoidable, Sir George Lyttleton, losing his employment with the rest, was recompensed with a peerage.

His last literary production was his "History of Henry the Second," elaborated by the researches and deliberations of twenty years. After living to see this work most favourably received by the public, he was seized with his last illness, and died the twenty-second of August 1773, aged 64 years.

"Lord Lyttleton's poems are the works of a man of literature and judgment devoting part of his time to versification. They have nothing to be despised, and little to be admired. Of his "Progress of Love," it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral. His blank verse in "Blenheim" has neither much force nor much elegance. His little performances, whether songs or epigrams, are sometimes sprightly, and sometimes insipid. His epistolary pieces have a smooth equability, which cannot much tire, because they are short, but which seldom *elevates* or *surprises*. But from this censure ought to be excepted his "Advice to Belinda," which, though for the most part written when he was very young, contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorously expressed, and shews a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raised to excellence."

GRAY.

THOMAS GRAY, the son of Mr. Philip Gray, a scrivener of London, was born in Cornhill 1716. His grammar education he received at Eton, and

when he left school, in 1734, entered a pensioner at Peterhouse in Cambridge.

After he had remained there about five years, where he took no degree (as he intended to follow the common law), Mr. Horace Walpole invited him to travel with him as his companion. They wandered through France into Italy, but at Florence they quarrelled and parted. Gray returned to England in September 1741, and in about two months afterwards buried his father, who had, by an injudicious waste of money upon a new house, so much lessened his fortune that Gray thought himself too poor to study the law. He therefore retired to Cambridge, where he soon after became Bachelor of Civil Law, and where he passed, except a short residence at London, the rest of his life.

“ Being advised not to finish a tragedy which he began of the name of “ Agrippina,” he produced in 1742 the “ Ode to Spring,” his “ Prospect of Eton,” and his “ Ode to Adversity.” He began likewise a Latin poem “ De Principiis Cogitandi.”

In his retirement at Peterhouse he wrote (1747) an ode on the “ Death of Mr. Walpole’s Cat,” and the year afterwards attempted a poem of more importance on “ Government and Education,” of which the fragments that remain have many excellent lines.

His next production (1750) was his far-famed “ Elegy in the Church-yard,” which, finding its way into a magazine, first made him known to

the public. An invitation from Lady Cobham about this time gave occasion to his "Long Story." In the year 1753 he lost his mother.

The "Progress of Poetry" and "The Bard" were published in 1757, and Gray's reputation was now so high, that, after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refusing the laurel, which was then bestowed on Mr. Whitehead.

When the Professor of Modern Languages at Cambridge died, he was, as he says, *cockered and spirited up* till he asked it of Lord Bute, who sent him a civil refusal.

In 1765, believing that his health was promoted by exercise and change of place, he undertook a journey into Scotland, of which his account, so far as it extends, is very curious and elegant. He there naturally contracted a friendship with Dr. Beattie.

What he had formerly solicited in vain was at last given him without solicitation. The Professorship of Languages became again vacant, and he received 1768 an offer of it from the Duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death.

Ill health made another journey necessary, and he visited (1769) Westmoreland and Cumberland. He that reads his epistolary narration wishes that to travel and to tell his travels had been more of his employment.

His travels and his studies were now near their end. The gout, of which he had sustained many weak attacks, fell upon his stomach, and yielding

to no medicines, produced strong convulsions, which (July 30, 1771) terminated in death.

Of his poetry Dr. Johnson's opinion is not very favourable. "His "Ode on Spring," says he, "has something poetical both in the language and the thoughts; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new."

"The Poem on the "Cat" was doubtless by its author considered as a trifle, but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza *the azure flowers that blow*, shew that a rhyme is sometimes made when it cannot easily be found. *Selima the Cat*" is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense; but there is good use made of it when it is done, for of the two lines,

What female heart can gold despise?

What cat's averse to fish?

the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The sixth stanza contains a melancholy truth, that *a favourite has no friend*; but the last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose; if what *glistened* had been *gold*, the cat would not have gone into the water, and if she had would not less have been drowned.

"The "Prospect of Eton College" suggests nothing to Gray which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to father *Thames* to tell him who drives the hoop, or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile. Father *Thames* has no better means of knowing than himself. His epithet of "buxom health" is not elegant; he

seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common use; finding in Dryden *honey redolent of spring*, an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond comprehension, by making *gales* to be *redolent of joy and youth*."

"— Of the "Ode on Adversity," at once poetical and rational, I will not by slight objections violate the dignity."

Dr. Johnson next enters into a particular examination of the "Progress of Poetry," and "The Bard," both which he, for the most part, severely censures. His criticism on Gray concludes with the following paragraphs:

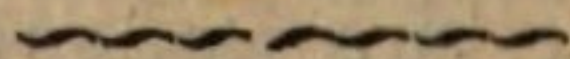
"These Odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double double toil and trouble*. He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tip-toe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease or nature.

"To say that he has no beauties would be unjust: a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill directed.

"His translations of Northern and Welsh poetry deserve praise: the imagery is preserved, perhaps

often improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

“ In the character of his “ *Elegy* ” I rejoice to concur with the common reader ; for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices , after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The “ *Church-yard* ” abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning, *Yet even these bones*, are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame and useless to praise him.”



BENJAMIN JONSON.

BENJAMIN JONSON was descended from an ancient family in Scotland ; his grandfather was originally of Annandale in that kingdom, and removed from thence to Carlisle in the reign of Henri VIII, under whom he enjoyed some post or office. The father of Jonson was a sufferer in the time of Queen Mary, and probably on the account of religion. He was not only imprisoned, but lost his estate, and afterwards entered into holy orders. It should seem that he did not enter into orders till after the death of Mary, and when

Queen Elizabeth was in possession of the crown. Whether he then lived at Carlisle, or at what time he left it with his family, is uncertain. But we find that he resided in Westminster at the time of his death. This happened in the year 1574, about a month before the birth of Benjamin his son. It is no where said on what day, or in what month of that year, nor in what part of Westminster, Jonson was born. Conjecture would lead us to imagine that he was born in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields. There was then a private school in that church, and to that he was first sent for education. He was afterwards removed from thence, and sent to Westminster school, where Camden was his master. Whilst he continued there, his mother married a second husband, by trade a bricklayer. As her son grew up, and was fit to be employed, his mother took him home, and obliged him to work at his father-in-law's business.

Disliking his father's business, he went into the Low Countries as a soldier. There he distinguished himself by his valour, killing and despoiling one of the enemies in the view of both armies. After his return home, he resumed his former studies and then became a member of the university of Cambridge; but his name does not occur, either in the public or private registers of that place. It is not easy to determine how long a time he continued at Cambridge; it was undoubtedly but short, his fortune not supplying him with the decent conveniencies of a learned ease.

When he left the university, he betook himself

to the play-house, a transition not peculiar to Jonson, nor uncommon in the present age. The play-house he entered in was an obscure one in the skirts of the town, and called the Green Curtain, in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch or Clerkenwell. At this time likewise he turned his thoughts to compositions for the stage; yet at first, his talents for writing, as well as those for acting, were far from being excellent; and the success in both was answerable. Most of his earlier pieces are said to have miscarried in the representation, or were afterwards neglected by him when his genius and his judgment improved. His attempts in acting could neither procure him a subsistence, nor recommend him to a share in any of the companies or theatres which in that age were numerous in the town. His inabilities as a player were a topic of satire to Jonson's adversaries; and they have mentioned some characters in which he appeared with no great credit or applause. Decker reproached him "with leaving his former occupation of mortar-treader to turn actor;" and informs us particularly, "that he performed the part of Zuliman at Paris-garden: that he ambled by a play-waggon in the highway, and took mad Jeronymo's part to get service among the mimics; that in this service he would have continued, but could not set a good face on the matter, and so was cashiered." It is ungenerous to reproach a man with imperfections he cannot prevent; but Decker had no wit nor humour, and made up what was wanting in both

by contumely and abuse. Happy was it for Jonson that his poverty was his chief crime, and that his adversaries could accuse him rather of the lowness of his fortunes than the ignominy of his mind or manners.

Whilst he was thus a retainer to the stage, he had the misfortune to be engaged in a duel; but Jonson was not the aggressor. In this rencounter he killed his opponent who had challenged him, and he himself was wounded in the arm by his adversary's sword ten inches longer than his own. Decker has casually told us this antagonist was a player. For this offence he was committed to prison; and, during his confinement, he was visited by a popish priest who, taking the advantage of his melancholy and dejection of spirits, made him a convert to the church of Rome. He continued twelve years in the Romish communion, but afterwards recanted, and was reconciled to the church of England. It is unknown how long he was kept in prison, and equally uncertain by what method he obtained a release from it.

We have now brought Jonson to about the twenty-fourth year of his age, from whence we are to date the rise of his reputation as a dramatic writer. About this time his acquaintance commenced with Shakespeare, who began it, as we are told, with a remarkable piece of service and good nature; nor is Jonson to be taxed with want of gratitude, or esteem for his friend. He had written a play or two which neither added to his reputation nor his profit. He was now offering

another to the public, and had put it into the hands of a person who, running it over in a careless supercilious manner, was returning it to him with answer, that it would be of no service to their company. Shakespeare happened luckily to cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him to read it through, and afterwards to recommend the poet and his writings to the public. The name of the play is nowhere mentioned; and I do not imagine it to have been any of those we now have; for he omitted some plays, unquestionably his own, when he published a volume of his works in folio.

In the year 1598 his comedy, intituled "*Every Man in his Humour*," was acted by the Lord Chamberlain's servants. Their theatre was called the Globe, and situate on the bank side in Southwark. Shakespeare belonged to it, and was a performer in this comedy of Jonson.

"*Every Man in his Humour*" is the first dramatic performance in the several editions of Jonson's works. After this he produced a play regularly every year for some years successively. "*Every Man out of his Humour*," his second comedy, was represented in 1599 at the same place, and by the same performers as the former play. There is much less design and action in this than in the preceding piece, but the characters are very strongly marked, and some of them have been thought to glance at particular persons of the author's acquaintance.

"*Cynthia's Revels*" was acted in the year 1600, and the performers were the children of Queen

Elizabeth's Chapel. Jonson has called this not a comedy, but a comical satire. This too has little or no plot, and the persons of the play are rather vices or passions personified than characters copied from real life; his principal intention seems to have been a desire to compliment the Queen under the allegorical personage of the goddess Cynthia.

His next performance was the *Poetaster*, which has also the title of a comical satire, and was represented by the same performers in 1601. There was at this time a quarrel between Jonson and Decker; possibly they were contending heroes for the poetic crown, but certainly the competition between them was very unequal. Decker was personally alluded to in this play under the character of Crispinus, and Jonson was further taxed of particularly reflecting in it on some professors of the law, and on some military men who were both well known in that age. The popular clamours against him upon this occasion ran very high, and to these he replied in vindication of himself by an apologetical dialogue, which was once spoken upon the stage, and which he annexed on the publication of his works to the end of his play. But Decker was bent upon revenge, and resolved, if possible, to conquer Jonson at his own weapons; for immediately after he wrote a play intitled "*Satirromastix, or the untrussing the Humorous Poet*;" and in this Jonson is introduced under the character of Horace junior. Of Decker's performance we may say it has much malice mingled with no wit: the "*Poetaster*" of Jonson has indeed some merit;

but it was abusing his talents, and his time, and paying no great compliment to an audience, to present them with the idle quarrels of himself and his rival ; and whatever it might cost his adversary, part of the entertainment was undoubtedly at his own expence.

The tragedy of "Sejanus" succeeded to "The Poetaster." It was acted in 1603, and the players were the King's Servants. These were the company belonging to the Globe, and were at first the Servants of the Lord Chamberlain. But in the beginning of this year they had a patent or licence for playing granted them by James the First, who at the same time honoured them with the title of his Servants. It appears from the preface to this play, that Shakespeare, who was an actor in it, wrote also, as we suppose, some parts of the tragedy ; but when Jonson published it in 1605, those parts or speeches were omitted by him.

After an intermission of two years, he wrote his comedy of "Volpone or the Fox," which was acted in 1605 by the same performers as the tragedy of "Sejanus ;" only we may observe that as Shakespeare's name is not in the list of the principal comedians, it is probable he had now left the stage to close his life in an easy and honourable retirement. The enemies of Jonson industriously gave out that all he wrote was produced with extreme pains and labour, and that he was not less than a year about every play. This objection, had it been true, was really no disgrace to him ; for the best authors know by experience,

that what appears to be the most natural and easy writing is frequently the effect of study, and the closest application ; but their design was to insinuate that Jonson had no parts and a poor unfruitful imagination. To this objection he has retorted in the prologue to this play : and from thence we learn that the whole was finished by him in five weeks. About this time he joined with Chapman and Marston in writing a comedy called “ Eastward-Hoe,” wherein they were accused of reflecting on the Scots. For this they were committed to prison, and were in danger of losing their ears and noses : however, they received a pardon ; and Jonson, on his release from prison, gave an entertainment to his friends, amongst whom were Camden and Selden. In the midst of the entertainment, his mother, more an antique Roman than a Briton, drank to him, and shewed him a paper of poison, which she intended to have given him in his liquor, having first taken a potion of it herself if the sentence for his punishment had passed.

A longer interval succeeded before the appearance of his next play ; and it was not till the year 1609 that “ Epicœne, or the Silent Woman,” was first acted ; but in these intervals his muse did not enjoy a perfect leisure, or cessation from business.

In the reigns of James the first, and his successor Charles, the exhibition of “ Masques ” became a principal diversion of the court. The queens of both these princes, not being natives of England, could not perhaps at first so readily understand the

language, so that the music and dancing and decorations of a masque were to them a higher entertainment than what they could receive from any other dramatic composition; and their pleasure was increased as they often condescended themselves to take a part in the performance. But Jonson was the chief factor for the court; most of these masques and entertainments were written by him; and there seldom passed a year in which he did not furnish one or two poetical pieces of this kind.

But these lighter efforts were only the recreations of his muse; and we now return to those weightier labours which he dignified with the title of works. The "Alchymist," a comedy, was acted in 1610; and though seemingly the most free from personal censure and reflection, it could not secure him the general applauses of the people. A contemporary author, and a friend to Jonson, has told us, that, on some account or other, they expressed a dislike either to the poet, or his play. The scriblers of the age had indeed a loud and numerous party at their call, and they were constantly let loose on Jonson whenever he brought a new play upon the stage. But their censure was his fame whilst he was loved and respected by genius, wit, and candour, and could number in the list of his friends, the prodigies of poetry, and miracles of learning and science. Shakespeare had cherished his infant muse; Beaumont and Fletcher esteemed and revered him; Donne had commended his merit, and Camden, the Strabo of Britain, and Selden, a living library, knew how to prize his literature and judgment.

The tragedy of "Catiline" was his next labour, which appeared in 1611. The long and frequent translations in this play from Sallust and Tully were fresh matter of calumny and malice to his railing adversaries; but the manner in which he appears to have received these attacks shews us that he thought himself in no great danger of being hurt by them. There was now an intermission of three years before the performance of his next play: but he had full employment for his muse at court, though he denied her labours to the people. The annual custom of a masque at Christmas and some intervening marriages of the nobility, contributed to keep his hand in use, so that we have a succession of these pieces, though some of them indeed without date from the year 1609 to 1615. Two of them were written for the entertainment of prince Henry, and the rest were represented by the Queen and her ladies, or by the lords and others servants of the King.

It appears that in 1613 Jonson was in France; but the occasion of his going, and the stay he made, are alike uncertain. During his continuance there, he was admitted to an interview and conversation with cardinal Perron: their discourse, we may imagine, turned chiefly upon literary subjects; the cardinal shewed him his translation of Virgil, and Jonson, with his usual openness and freedom, told him it was a bad one.

His next play was the comedy called "Bartholomew Fair," acted in 1614; and that was succeeded by the "Devil is an Ass," in 1616. In this

year he published his works, in a fair volume in folio, many of which had been separately printed before in quarto. In this volume were inserted all the plays, excepting the two last, with his masques and entertainments; and to these were added a book of Epigrams, and a collection of longer Poems, which he entitled "The Forest."

We are now to look for him in the bosom of the muses, and we find that soon after this he resided in Christ-church college, in Oxford, to which place he had been invited by some members of the university, and particularly by Dr. Corbet, a poet, and an admirer of Jonson. Mr. Wood says that whilst he continued there he wrote some of his plays; but that matter is not very certain. This however is unquestionable, that there he received a very ample and honourable testimony to his merit, being created, in a full house of convocation, a master of arts of that university, in July 1619. On the death of Samuel Daniel, in October following, he succeeded to the vacant laureat. This province for many years had been discharged by Jonson, although Daniel wanted not for genius, and was honoured with the good opinion of the Queen. The laureat's pay was originally a pension of one hundred marks *per annum*; but in 1630 Jonson presented a petition to King Charles, requesting him to make those marks as many pounds. His petition was granted; and accordingly, on the surrender of his former letters patent, new ones were issued, appointing him the annual pension of one hundred pounds,

and a tierce of Spanish wine. The same salary is continued to this day. At the latter end of this year he went on foot into Scotland on purpose to visit Drummond of Hawthornden. His adventures in this journey he wrought into a poem ; but that copy, with many other pieces, was accidentally burned.

Jonson's office as poet laureat enjoined him to provide the Christmas diversion of a masque, and we have accordingly a series of these, and other entertainments of a like kind, most of which were presented at court from 1615 to 1625. In this last year was exhibited his comedy called "The Staple of News;" and from thence to the year 1629 the writing of masques was the chief employment of his pen, excepting possibly some shorter pieces, to which there is no date. In that year his comedy intituled "The New Inn, or the Light Heart," was attempted to be acted ; but a strong opposition was formed against it, and some of the players were negligent and careless in their parts. Jonson resented with indignation the ill treatment which his play received, and wrote an ode to himself, as a persuasive to leave the stage. "The New Inn," with the ode annexed, was printed in 1631, and a very severe reply was soon after written by Owen Feltham, in verse, and in the same measure with Jonson's ode. He was at that time ill, and lived in an obscure necessitous condition, and there is a printed story which tells us that the King, who heard of it, sent him a benevolence of ten pounds. and that Jonson when he received the money,

returned the following answer : “ His Majesty
“ has sent me ten pounds, because I am old and
“ poor, and live in an alley; go, and tell him
“ that his soul lives in an alley.” The bluntness of
Jonson’s temper might easily afford occasion for
such a story to be made; and there is an ex-
pression not unlike it occurring in his works, but
the fact is otherwise. It is true, that he was poor
and ill; but the King relieved him with a bounty
of one hundred pounds, which he has expressly
acknowledged by an epigram written in that very
year, and on that particular occasion.

Jonson continued for some time in this low state;
and in 1631 he solicited the lord treasurer for re-
lief in a short poem addressed to him, which he
called an “ Epistle Mendicant,” and in which he
complains that he had laboured under sickness and
want for five years.

The want of success attending the preceding
play did not discourage him from taking the field
again. There are two comedies subsequent, in
point of time, to the “ New Inn,” but both are
without a date. Of these, the “ Tale of a Tub” was
probably his last performance, and is undoubtedly
one of those later compositions which Dryden
has called his dotages, but yet they are the do-
tages of Jonson. The “ Magnetic Lady” suc-
ceeded the “ New Inn,” though the time of its
being first acted is uncertain. The malevolence
of criticism, which had marked him for its prey
in his younger years, could not be persuaded to
reverence his age, but pursued him with unwearied

steps, nor left him as long as he could hold a pen; and if we adopt the maxim of a celebrated wit, Jonson must have been certainly a genius from the confederacy of the dunces against him. Alexander Gill, a Poetaster of the times, attacked him with a brutal fury on account of this last play; but Gill was a bad man, as well as a wretched poet; and Jonson, with both these advantages, revenged himself by a short but cutting reply. There are two other pieces which are left unfinished, the "Sad Shepherd," a pastoral tragedy, and the "Fall of Mortimer." Of this last there is only the plan of the drama, and one or two scenes; but the other is carried on almost to the conclusion of the third act; and it is a doubt whether he left it so by design, or whether he was prevented by death.

The masques and entertainments went on in the same successive order as before, and the last of these was represented in July 1634. His smaller poems were most of them occasional. The greatest part are without date, nor is there any thing in the subject that leads us to determine the precise time of their composition. Beside the plays, which are entirely his own, Jonson joined with Fletcher and Middleton in writing a comedy called the "Widow;" and he assisted Dr. Hacket, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, in translating the Essays of lord Bacon into Latin.

After the year 1634 we do not find that he wrote any thing, or at least, not any thing designed for the stage. He made indeed a translation of "Horace's Art of Poetry," an "English Grammar,"

and "Observations of Men and Things," which he has called "Discoveries." But the "Art of Poetry" was translated by him very early, for he mentions it in the preface to "Sejanus" as what he proposed shortly to publish, illustrated with notes; but it does not appear to have been published till after he was dead, and much of what was probably intended for the notes is inserted in the "Discoveries." These are a very excellent piece, the fruits of mature and judicious age, valuable not only for the sentiments and observations, but as a pattern of a nervous and concise style. His grammar was written by him when advanced in years; and, in the judgment of Mr. Wotton, Jonson was the first who did any thing considerable with regard to the grammar of the English Language: but, as that author observes, Lylly's Grammar was his pattern; and for want of reflecting upon the grounds of a language, which he understood as well as any man of his age, he drew it by violence to a dead language, that was of a quite different make, and so left his book imperfect.

In the decline of his life, Jonson was seized with the palsy, which we suppose afflicted him till the time of his death. He died on the sixth of August 1637, in the sixty-third of his age, and three days after he was interred in Westminster Abbey, at the north west end, near the belfry, under the escutcheon of Robert de Ros or Roos. Over his grave is a common pavement stone, given, says Anthony Wood, by Jack Young of great Milton in Oxfordshire, afterwards knighted by King Charles

the Second, and on it are engraven these words: O RARE BEN JONSON! In the beginning of the year following a collection of Elegies and Poems on his death was published under the title of "Jonsonius Virbius," or "the Memory of Ben Jonson revived by the friends of the Muses." In this collection are poems by most of the men of genius in that age: by the lord Falkland, the lord Buckhurst, sir John Beaumont, sir Thomas Hawkins, Mr. Waller, by Waring, Mayne, and Cartwright of Oxford, with many others; and among the rest is Owen Feltham, who attacked him so severely in answer to his Ode on the "New Inn." This piece was published by Dr. Duppa, Bishop of Chichester, and tutor to Charles the Second then prince of Wales. What is there so desirable as to be loved in life and lamented after death by wise and good men? or what more honourable to a poet than to have his memory embalmed by the tears of the Muses?—Soon after, a design was set on foot to erect a monument and a statue to him, and a considerable sum of money was collected for that purpose; but, the rebellion breaking out, the design was never executed, and the money was returned. The monument now erected to him in the abbey was placed there at the expense of that great encourager of learning the second earl of Oxford of the Harley family.

It appears that Jonson was married and had several children; but none survived him: and we know nothing of his wife, or her descent. His eldest son was Benjamin, which was probably the

name of Jonson's father, and his eldest daughter Mary. His twenty second epigram is on the loss of this daughter, who died when six months old ; and the forty-fifth is on the decease of his son at the age of seven years.

His person was corpulent and large ; and his face, if we may believe his admirers, resembled Menander's, as the head of that poet is represented upon ancient gems and medals : in like manner as Vida is said to have resembled Virgil. His disposition was reserved and saturnine, and sometimes not a little oppressed with the gloom of a splenetic imagination. He told Drummond, as an instance of this, that he had lain a whole night fancying he saw the Carthaginians and Romans, Turks and Tartars, fighting on his great toe. He has been often represented as of an envious, arrogant, over-bearing temper, and insolent and haughty in his converse : but these ungracious drawings were the performance of his enemies, who certainly were not solicitous to give a flattering likeness in their portraits of the original. But considering the provocations he received, with the mean and contemptible talents of those who opposed him, what we condemn as vanity or conceit might be only the exertions of conscious and insulted merit. He was laborious and indefatigable in his studies ; his reading was copious and extensive ; his memory so tenacious and strong that, when turned of forty, he could have repeated all that he had ever written ; his judgment accurate and solid ; and he was often consulted by those who knew him well in branches

of very curious learning, and far remote from the flowery paths loved and frequented by the Muses. The lord Falkland, in his elegy, celebrates him as an admirable scholar; and says, that the extracts he took, and the observations which he made on the books he read, were themselves a treasure of learning, though the originals should happen to be lost. In his friendships he was cautious and sincere, yet accused of levity and ingratitude to his friends: but his accusers were the criminals, insensible of the charms, and strangers to the privileges of friendship. For the powers of friendship, not the least of virtues, can be only experienced by the virtuous and good; and with these Jonson was happily connected in the bonds of intimacy and affection. Randolph and Cartwright revered him as the great reformer, and as the father of the British stage, and gloried in the honorary title of his adopted sons: and Selden has acknowledged the good offices which Jonson did him by his interest at court, when he had incurred the royal displeasure by publishing his "History of Tithes." Stern and rigid as his virtue was, this Cato of poets was easy and social in the convivial meetings of his friends; and the laws of his Symposia, inscribed over the chimney of the Apollo, a room in the Devil-Tavern near Temple-Bar, where he kept his club, shew us that he was neither averse to the pleasures of conversation, nor ignorant of what would render it agreeable and improving. It is true that he was sparing in his commendations of the works of others, which probably gave occasion to accuse

him of envy and ill nature; but when he commends, he does it with sincerity and warmth. A man of sense is always cautious in giving characters; nor will an honest man applaud where he cannot approve; and Jonson well knew the people may admire, but that to praise is an act of knowledge and of judgment.

By the death of Jonson his family itself became extinct, the only issue he left being his Plays and Poems; and their fate has in some measure resembled his. Yet such is the felicity of their better fortunes, that surviving the attacks of envious contemporary rivals, they have received, from the justice of discerning unprejudiced posterity, a fair and an increasing fame. With those, whose taste for simple and striking copies of nature is yet uncorrupted by the fastidious delicacy of fashionable refinements, the works of Jonson stand high in esteem: and as they are read from age to age, so they will perpetuate his name with all the honours which his genius and his learning deserve.

SPENSER.

IN the reign of Queen Elizabeth, so fruitful in genius, flourished Edmund Spenser the most eminent of English Poets till that time, unless we except Chaucer, who was, in some respects, his master and original. The accounts we have of his birth and family are but obscure and imperfect; and it has happened to him, as to many other men

of genius and learning, to be much better known by his works than by the history of his life. He was born in London, at what period is uncertain, and had his education at Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, where he stood for a fellowship in competition with Mr. Andrews, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, but without success. This disappointment, added to the narrowness of his circumstances, forced him to quit the university; and we next find him residing with some friends in the North, where he fell in love with his Rosalind, whom he so beautifully celebrates in his pastoral poems, and of whose cruelty he so pathetically complains.

Poetry is frequently the offspring of love and retirement; it is, therefore, probable his genius began first to distinguish itself about this time; for the Shepherd's Calendar, which is so full of his unsuccessful passion for Rosalind, was the first of his works which obtained distinction. This he addressed, by a short dedication in verse, to Sir Philip Sidney, under the humble signature of *Immerito*. Sir Philip was then in the highest reputation for wit, gallantry and polite accomplishment; and seems, indeed, to have been the most universally admired and beloved of the Gentlemen of the age in which he lived. He was himself a very good writer, and excelled more especially in the fabulous or inventive part of poetry; it is, therefore, not to be wondered, that he soon became sensible of the merit of our author. He was one of the first who discovered it, and recommended it to the notice of the best judges of that time; and, so long as this

great man lived, Spenser never wanted a judicious friend and a generous patron.

After a residence of some time in the North, Spenser yielded to the suggestions of some friends, who advised him to quit his obscure retirement, and go to London, that he might be in the way of promotion. He alludes to this circumstance in his sixth Eclogue, where Hobbinol, a name by which he designates his intimate friend Mr. Gabriel Harvey, persuades Colin to leave the hilly country, as barren and unthriving solitude, and remove to a better soil. The first step he afterwards made towards preferment was, as has already been observed, his acquaintance with Sir Philip Sidney; but whether that acquaintance began immediately on his addressing to him the Shepherd's Calendar, or some time after, appears uncertain. The reason of this uncertainty is, that he is said to have been a stranger to Sir Philip when he had begun to write his "Fairy Queen," and that he went to Leicester-house and introduced himself by sending in to Sir Philip, then Mr. Sidney, a copy of the ninth Canto of the first book of that Poem. Mr. Sidney was struck with surprise at the description of Despair in that Canto; and, after having read some stanzas, turned to his steward with an unusual kind of transport, and ordered him to give the person who brought those verses fifty pounds; and, having read the next stanza, ordered the sum to be doubled. The steward was no less surprised than his master, and thought it his duty to make some delay in executing so sudden and lavish a bounty;

but Mr. Sidney, having read one stanza more, raised his gratuity to two hundred pounds, and commanded the steward to give it immediately, lest, as he read further, he might be tempted to give away his whole estate. From this time he admitted the author to his acquaintance and conversation, and prepared the way for his being known and received at court.

He did not, however, immediately reap any great benefit from this introduction. He was indeed created Poet Laureat to the Queen, but for some time he wore a barren laurel, the place without the pension. The Lord Treasurer Burleigh had not, as it seems, the same taste of Spenser's merit with Sir Philip Sidney; and whether from neglect, or some particular resentment, or from whatever cause, he is said to have intercepted the Queen's bounty to this unfortunate and ingenious man. This made a deep impression on Spenser's mind, which seems to have continued through a great part of his life: accordingly we find him, in many parts of his works, pouring forth his heart in complaints of so hard and undeserved a treatment. The absence of his noble patron Sir Philip Sidney by his employments abroad, and particularly in the wars of the Low Countries, rendered this treatment the more unfortunate.

In a poem called the Ruins of Time, which was written some time after Sidney's death, Spenser seems to allude to this discouragement; and in the poem called the "Tears of the Muses" he reproaches persons of rank and fortune with their total disregard of learning.

It is said, that the Lord Treasurer, who perhaps at first only neglected Spenser, conceived afterwards a hatred of him on account of some reflections which he conceived were made on himself in Mother Hubbard's Tale. And it is true that in this poem Spenser has painted, in the most lively manner, the misfortunes attending on dependance on Court-favour.

A story which seems founded on the grievance before mentioned is related by some as a matter of fact commonly reported at that time. It is said that the Queen, on Spenser's presenting some poems to her, ordered him a gratuity of one hundred pounds, but that the Lord Treasurer Burleigh objecting to it said, with some scorn of the poet—"What! all this for a song?"—The Queen replied—"Then give him what is reason"—Spenser waited for some time, but had the mortification to find himself disappointed of the Queen's intended bounty. On this he took a proper opportunity to present a paper to Queen Elizabeth in the manner of a petition, in which he reminded her of the orders she had given, in the following lines:

I was promis'd on a time
To have reason for my rhyme:
From that time unto this season
I receiv'd nor rhyme nor reason.

This paper produced the desired effect; and the Queen, not without some reproof of the Treasurer, immediately directed the payment of the hundred pounds she had at first ordered.

But though Spenser had so little interest with the Lord Treasurer, yet we find him, some time after his appearance at Court, in considerable esteem with the most eminent men of that time. In the year 1579 he was sent abroad by the Earl of Leicester as appears by a copy of Latin verses dated from Leicester-house, and addressed to his friend Mr. Harvey; but in what service he was employed is uncertain. He afterwards made a considerable advance towards promotion on the appointment of the Lord Grey of Wilton to the situation of Deputy of Ireland, to whom he was recommended as secretary. This drew him over into another kingdom, and settled him for some time in a scene of life very different from what he had known before. There can be no doubt of his having discharged the duties of his employment with fidelity and capacity. This appears manifest from his Discourse on the state of Ireland, in which there are many solid and judicious remarks, which shew him no less qualified for business of state than for cultivating the favours of the Muses.

His life now seemed to be freed from the difficulties which had hitherto perplexed it, and his services to the Crown were rewarded by a grant from Queen Elizabeth of 3000 acres of land in the County of Corke. His house was in Kilcolman, and the River Mulla, which he has more than once so beautifully introduced into his Poems, ran thro' his grounds.

It was about this time that he contracted an intimate friendship with Sir Walter Raleigh, who

was then a Captain under the Lord Grey. The poem intituled, "Colin Clout's come home again," in which Sir Walter is described under the name of the Shepherd of the Ocean, is a beautiful memorial of this friendship, which took its rise from a likeness of taste in the polite arts, and is agreeably described by our author, after the pastoral manner, in the following lines :

————— I sate, as was my trade
 Under the foot of Mole, that mountain hore,
 Keeping my sheep amongst the cooly shade
 Of the green alders, by the Mulla's shore ;
 There a strange Shepherd chanc'd to find me out,
 Whether allured with my pipe's delight,
 Whose pleasing sound yshrilled far about,
 Or thither led by chance I know not right ;
 Whom when I asked from what place he came,
 And how he hight—himself he did ycleep
 The Shepherd of the Ocean by name,
 And said he came far from the main-sea deep.
 He sitting me beside in that same shade
 Provoked me to play some pleasant fit,
 And when he heard the musick that I made,
 He found himself full greatly pleas'd at it.
 Yet æmuling my pipe, he took in hond
 My pipe, before that æmuled of many,
 And plaid thereon, for well that skill he con'd
 Himself as skilful in that art as any.

Sir Walter rendered him some services afterwards at Court, and by his means Queen Elizabeth became more particularly acquainted than before with his writings.

He was here a more successful lover than when he courted Rosalind. The collection of his Sonnets is a kind of short history of the progress of a new amour, which we find ended in marriage, and gave occasion to an excellent Epithalamium, which no one could so well write as himself.

In this pleasant situation he finished his celebrated poem of the Fairy Queen, which was begun and continued at different intervals of time, and of which he published at first only the three first books. To these were added three more in a following edition; but the last six, excepting the two cantos of Mutability, were unfortunately lost by his servant, whom he had sent in haste before him to England: for though he passed his life for sometime very serenely in his retreat, yet a train of misfortunes still pursued him; and in the Rebellion of the Earl of Desmond he was plundered and deprived of his estate. This forced him to return to England, where his afflictions were doubled from the want of his best friend, the brave Sir Philip Sidney, who died some years before of the wounds he had received in an action near Zutphen in the Netherlands.

Spenser survived his beloved patron about twelve years; but seems to have spent the latter part of that time with much grief of heart under the disappointment of a broken fortune. It is remarkable that he died the same year with his powerful enemy the Lord Burleigh, which was in 1598. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the famous Geoffry Chaucer, as he had himself desired.

His obsequies were attended by the poets of that time, and others who were eager to pay the last honours to his memory. Several copies of verses were thrown into his grave; and his monument was erected at the charge of the famous Robert Devereux, the unfortunate Earl of Essex. The stone of which it is made is much broken and defaced; the inscription on it is as follows:

“Heare lyes (expecting the second comminge of
“our Saviour Christ Jesus) the body of Edmond
“Spencer, the prince of poets in his time; whose
“divine spirit needs no other witness than the
“works which he left behind him. He was borne
“in London in the yeare 1510, and died in the
“yeare 1596.”

It is observable that this differs from Camden's account of his death, who says it was in 1598, in the forty-first year of the Queen's reign. But still less dependance is to be put upon this epitaph with respect to the time of his birth, in which it appears there must have been some very gross mistake. It is altogether improbable that he was born so early as 1510, if we judge only by so remarkable a circumstance as that of his being a candidate for a fellowship in competition with Mr. Andrews, who was not born till 1555. Besides, if this account of his birth were true, he must have been above sixty years old when he first published his Shepherd's Calendar, an age not very compatible with Love Poetry, and in his seventieth year when he entered into business with the Lord Grey, who was created Deputy of Ireland

in 1580. For these reasons it may very fairly be concluded, either that this inscription is erroneous from the fault of the carver, which may seem the more probable, because the spelling is likewise very bad even for that time, or that the date was inserted sometime afterwards, when the monument was perhaps repaired. The inscription seems indeed not to be the original one which is mentioned by Dr. Fuller and others to have been in Latin. In a small Latin treatise describing the monuments of Westminster in the year 1600, published, as is supposed, by Mr. Camden, we find the following account of it :

Edmundus Spenser, Londinensis, Anglicorum poetarum nostri seculi facilè princeps, quod ejus poemata, faventibus Musis et victuro Genio conscripta, comprobant. Obiit immaturâ morte, anno salutis 1598, et prope Galfredum Chaucerum conditur, qui felicissimè poesim Anglicis litteris primus illustravit. In quem hæc scripta sunt epitaphia :

“ Hic prope Chaucerum situs est Spenseri, illi

“ Proximus ingenio, proximus ut tumulo.

“ Hic prope Chaucerum, Spensere Poeta, Poetam

“ Conderis, et versu quàm tumulo propior :

“ Anglica, te vivo, vixit plaussitque Poesis ;

“ Nunc moritura timet, te moriente, mori. ”

The absurdity of supposing Spenser born in 1510 appears plainly from the expression *immaturâ morte*, which could not with any propriety be applied to a man who had died at the age of eighty eight.

Beside those works of Spenser which have been

preserved, it is ascertained that he had written several others, of which the titles only can now be traced. Among these were nine Comedies, in imitation of the comedies of his admired Ariosto, inscribed with the names of the nine Muses. The rest, which are mentioned in his Letters, and those of his friends, are his Dying Pelicane, his Pageants, Stemmata Dudleyana, the Canticles Paraphrased, Ecclesiastes, Seven Psalms, Hours of our Lord, Sacrifice of a Sinner, Purgatory, A Se'nnight's Slumber, The Court of Cupid, and The Hill of Lovers. It is likewise said, he had written a treatise in prose, called The English Poet. As for the Epithalamion Thamesis, and his Dreams, both mentioned by himself in one of his letters, they seem to be still preserved, though under different names. It appears, from what is said of the Dreams by his friend Mr. Harvey, that they were an imitation of Petrarch's Visions; and it is therefore probable that they are the same which were afterwards published under the several titles of Visions of the World's Vanity, Bellay's Visions, Petrarch's Visions, &c. And though by one of his letters we find he had formed the plan of a poem called the Epithalamion Thamesis, and intended, after a fashion then newly introduced, to write it in English hexameters, yet whoever observes the account he gives of it there, and compares it with canto XI of book IV of the Fairy Queen, will see reason to believe that he suspended his first thought, and wrought it afterwards into that beautiful episode of the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, which is so great an

ornament to that book. This will appear yet the more probable, if it be considered that, with all its beauty, that episode is no essential part of the poem, but is rather an excrescence, or a digression from it.

Hardly any account can be found of the family which Spenser left behind him; all we know is that in the few particulars of his life prefixed to the last folio edition of his works, it is said that his great grandson, Hugolin Spenser, after the return of Charles II, was restored by the Court of Claims to so much of the lands as could be ascertained to have been his ancestor's. Whether this be true or not can hardly be determined; but there is another circumstance of which we have much better assurance—that a person came over from Ireland in the reign of King William to solicit the same affair, and brought with him letters of recommendation as a descendant of Spenser. His name procured him a favourable reception; and he applied particularly to Mr. Congreve, by whom he was generously recommended to the favour of the late Earl of Halifax, who was then at the head of the Treasury, and thus obtained his suit. This man was somewhat advanced in years, and might have been the same mentioned before, who had possibly recovered only some part of the estate at first, or had been disturbed in the possession of it. He could give no account of the works of his ancestor which are wanting, and which are therefore, in all probability, irrecoverably lost.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was the son of John Shakespeare, and was born at Stratford upon Avon, in Warwickshire, in April 1564. His family, as appears by the register and public writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as Gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free school, where, it is probable, he acquired what Latin he was master of; but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversy, that in his works we scarce find any traces of any thing that looks like an imitation of the ancients. The delicacy of his taste, and the natural bent of his own great *genius* (equal, if not superior, to some of the best of theirs), would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mixed with his own writings; so that his not copying at least something from them may be an argument of his never having read them. Whether his ignorance of the ancients was a disadvantage to him or not, may admit of a dispute:

for though the knowledge of them might have made him more correct, yet it is not improbable but that the regularity and deference for them, which would have attended that correctness, might have restrained some of that fire, impetuosity, and even beautiful extravagance, which we admire in Shakespeare: and I believe we are better pleased with those thoughts, altogether new and uncommon, which his own imagination supplied him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful passages out of the Greek and Latin poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a master of the English language to deliver them.

Upon his leaving school, he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him; and, in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In this kind of settlement he continued for some time, till an extravagance, that he was guilty of, forced him both out of his country, and that way of living which he had taken up; and though it seems at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exerting one of the greatest *geniuses* that ever was known in dramatic poetry. He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into bad company, and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice

of deer-stealing engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Cherlecot near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost¹, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London.

It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to have made his first acquaintance in the playhouse². He was received into the company then in being, at first, in a very mean rank; but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of the other players before some old plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and, though I have inquired, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance

¹ See, however, Note to the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, p. 244. REED.

² There is a stage tradition, that his first office in the theatre was that of prompter's attendant, whose employment is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage. MALONE.

was the Ghost in his own "Hamlet." I should have been much more pleased to have learned, from certain authority, which was the first play he wrote¹; it would be without doubt a pleasure to any man, curious in things of this kind, to see and know what was the first essay of a fancy like Shakespeare's. Perhaps we are not to look for his beginnings, like those of other authors, among their least perfect writings; art had so little, and nature had so large a share in what he did, that, for aught I know, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, and had the most fire and strength of imagination in them, were the best. I would not be thought by this to mean that his fancy was so loose and extravagant as to be independent on the rule and government of judgment, but that what he thought was commonly so great, so justly and rightly conceived in itself, that it wanted little or no correction, and was immediately approved by an impartial judgment at the first sight. But though the order of time in which the several pieces were written be generally uncertain, yet there are passages in some few of them which seem to fix their dates. So the *Chorus* at the end of the fourth act of "Henry the Fifth," by a compliment very handsomely turned to the Earl of Essex, shews the play to have been written when that lord was general for

¹ The highest date of any I can yet find is "Romeo and Juliet" in 1597, when the author was 33 years old; and "Richard the Second and Third," in the next year, viz. the 34th of his age.

the Queen in Ireland; and his eulogy upon Queen Elizabeth, and her successor King James, in the latter end of his "Henry the Eighth," is a proof of that play's being written after the accession of the latter of those two princes to the crown of England. Whatever the particular times of his writing were, the people of his age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleased to see a *genius* arise from amongst them of so pleasurable, so rich a vein, and so plentifully capable of furnishing their favourite entertainments. Beside the advantages of his wit, he was in himself a good natured man, of great sweetness in his manners, and a most agreeable companion; so that it is no wonder, if, with so many good qualities, he made himself acquainted with the best conversations of those times. Queen Elizabeth had several of his plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour: it is that maiden princess plainly, whom he intends by

—A fair vestal, throned by the west.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

and that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in, and very handsomely applied to her. She was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff, in "The two Parts of Henry the Fourth," that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to shew him in love. This is said to be the occasion of his writing "The Merry Wives of Windsor." How well she was

obeyed, the play itself is an admirable proof. Upon this occasion it may not be improper to observe, that this part of Falstaff is said to have been written originally under the name of "Oldcastle¹;" some of that family being then remaining, the Queen was pleased to command him to alter it; upon which he made use of Falstaff. The present offence was indeed avoided; but I do not know whether the author may not have been somewhat to blame in his second choice, since it is certain that Sir John Falstaff, who was a knight of the garter, and a lieutenant-general, was a name of distinguished merit in the wars in France in Henry the Fifth's and Henry the Sixth's times. What grace soever the Queen conferred upon him, it was not to her only he owed the fortune which the reputation of his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of Southampton, famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of Essex. It was to that noble lord that he dedicated his poem of "Venus and Adonis." There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare's, that, if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William Davenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted—that my lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase

¹ See the Epilogue to "Henry the Fourth."

which he heard he had a mind to; a bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age hath shewn to French dancers and Italian singers.

What particular habitude or friendship he contracted with private men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one, who had a true taste of merit, and could distinguish men, had generally a just value and esteem for him. His exceeding candour and good-nature must certainly have inclined all the gentler part of the world to love him, as the power of his wit obliged the men of the most delicate knowledge and polite learning to admire him.

His acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good-nature. Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public. Jonson was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advantage of Shakespeare; though at the same time, I believe, it must be allowed that what nature gave the latter was more than a balance for what books had given the former; and the

judgment of a great man upon this occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir John Suckling, Sir William Davenant, Endymion Porter, Mr. Hales of Eton, and Ben Jonson, Sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakespeare, had undertaken his defence against Ben Jonson with some warmth; Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time, told them, *That if Mr. Shakespeare had not read the ancients, he had likewise not stolen any thing from them; and that if he would produce any one topic finely treated by any one of them, he would undertake to shew something upon the same subject, at least as well written, by Shakespeare.*

The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion, and, in that, to his wish; and is said to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford. His pleasurable wit and good-nature engaged him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. Amongst them, it is a story almost still remembered in that country, that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury: it happened that, in a pleasant conversation amongst their common friends, Mr. Combe told Shakespeare, in a laughing manner, that he fancied he intended to write his epitaph, if he happened to out-live him; and since he could not know

what might be said of him when he was dead, he desired it might be done immediately : upon which Shakespeare gave him these four verses ;

Ten in the hundred lies here engrav'd,
'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd :
If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb ?
Oh ! oh ! quoth the devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.

But the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely that he never forgave it.

He died in the 53d year of his age, and was buried on the north-side of the chancel, in the great church at Stratford, where a monument¹ was erected to his memory. On his grave-stone underneath is,

Good friend ! for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust inclosed here.
Blest be the man that spares these stones !
And curst be he that moves my bones² !

He had three daughters, of whom two lived to be married ; Judith, the elder, to one Mr. Thomas

¹ He died on his birth-day, April 23, 1616, and had exactly completed his fifty-second year. MALONE.

² *And curst be he that moves my bones !*

It is uncertain whether this epitaph was written by Shakespeare himself, or by one of his friends after his death. The imprecation contained in this last line might have been suggested by an apprehension that our author's remains might share the same fate with those of the rest of his countrymen, and be added to the immense pile of human bones deposited in the charnel-house at Stratford. This, however, is mere conjecture ; for similar execrations are found in many ancient Latin epitaphs. MALONE.

Quiney, by whom she had three sons, who all died without children; and Susanna, who was his favourite, to Dr. John Hall, a physician of good reputation in that country. She left one child only, a daughter who was married, first to Thomas Nash, Esq. and afterwards to Sir John Bernard of Abbing-ton, but died likewise without issue¹.

This is what I could learn of any note, either relating to himself or family: the character of the man is best seen in his writings. But since Ben Jonson has made a sort of an essay towards it in his *Discoveries*, I will give it in his words:

“I remember the players have often mentioned it
 “as an honour to Shakespeare, that in writing—what
 “soever he penned—he never blotted out a line.
 “My answer hath been, *Would he had blotted a thou-*
 “*sand!* which they thought a malevolent speech.
 “I had not told posterity this, but for their igno-
 “rance, who chose that circumstance to commend
 “their friend by, wherein he most faulted: and to
 “justify mine own candour, for I loved the man,
 “and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry,
 “as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and
 “of an open and free nature, had an excellent
 “fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions;
 “wherein he flowed with that facility, that some-
 “times it was necessary he should be stopped:
 “*Sufflaminandus erat*, as Augustus said of Hate-
 “rius. His wit was in his own power. Would the

¹ This, however, is a mistake, as will appear by the pedigree annexed to the list of baptisms, &c. REED.

“ rule of it had been so too! Many times he fell
 “ into those things which could not escape laugh-
 “ ter; as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one
 “ speaking to him,

Cæsar, thou dost me wrong,
 “ he replied,

Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause.

“ And such like, which were ridiculous. But he re-
 “ deemed his vices with his virtues : there was ever
 “ more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.”

As for the passage which he mentions out of Shakespeare, there is somewhat like it in “Julius Cæsar,” but without the absurdity; nor did I ever meet with it in any edition that I have seen, as quoted by Mr. Jonson. Beside his plays in this edition, there are two or three ascribed to him by Mr. Langbain, which I have never seen, and know nothing of. He wrote likewise “Venus and Adonis,” and “Tarquin and Lucrece,” in stanzas, which have been printed in a late collection of poems. As to the character given of him by Ben Jonson, there is a good deal in it : but I believe it may be as well expressed by what Horace says of the first Romans, who wrote tragedy upon the Greek models (or indeed translated them) in his epistle to Augustus:

*Naturâ sublimis et acer :
 Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet ;
 Sed turpem putat in chartis metuitque lituram.*

As I have not proposed to myself to enter into a large and complete collection upon Shakespeare's

works, so I will only take the liberty, with all due submission to the judgment of others, to observe some of those things I have been pleased with in looking him over.

His plays are properly to be distinguished only into comedies and tragedies. Those which are called histories, and even some of his comedies, are really tragedies, with a run or mixture of comedy amongst them. That way of tragi-comedy was the common mistake of that age, and is indeed become so agreeable to the English taste, that though the severer critics among us cannot bear it, yet the generality of our audiences seem to be better pleased with it than with an exact tragedy. "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "The Comedy of Errors," and "The Taming of the Shrew," are all pure comedy; the rest, however they are called, have something of both kinds. It is not very easy to determine which way of writing he was most excellent in. There is certainly a great deal of entertainment in his comical humours; and though they did not then strike at all ranks of people, as the satire of the present age has taken the liberty to do, yet there is a pleasing and a well-distinguished variety in those characters which he thought fit to meddle with. Falstaff is allowed by every body to be a master-piece; the character is always well sustained though drawn out into the length of three plays; and even the account of his death, given by his old landlady, Mrs. Quickly, in the first act of "Henry the Fifth," though it be extremely natural, is yet as diverting as any part of his life. If there

be any fault in the draught he has made of this lewd old fellow, it is that, though he has made him a thief, lying, cowardly, vain-glorious, and, in short, every way vitious, yet he has given him so much wit as to make him almost too agreeable; and I do not know whether some people have not, in remembrance of the diversion he had formerly afforded them, been sorry to see his friend Hal use him so scurvily when he comes to the crown in the end of "The Second Part of Henry the Fourth." Amongst other extravagancies, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," he hath made him a deer-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his Warwickshire prosecutor under the name of Justice Shallow; he has given him very near the same coat of arms which Dugdale, in his *Antiquities* of that county, describes for a family there, and makes the Welsh parson descant very pleasantly upon them. That whole play is admirable; the humours are various and well opposed; the main design, which is to cure Ford of his unreasonable jealousy, is extremely well conducted. In "Twelfth Night" there is something singularly ridiculous and pleasant in the fantastical steward Malvolio. The parasite and the vain glorious Parolles, in "All's Well that Ends Well," is as good as any thing of that kind in Plautus or Terence. Petruchio, in "The Taming of the Shrew," is an uncommon piece of humour. The conversation of Benedict and Beatrice in "Much Ado About Nothing," and of Rosalind in "As you Like it," have much wit and sprightliness all along. His clowns, without

which character there was hardly any play written in that time, are all very entertaining; and, I believe, Thersites in "Troilus and Cressida," and Ape-mantus in "Timon," will be allowed to be master-pieces of ill nature, and satirical - snarling. To these I might add that incomparable character of Shylock the Jew in "The Merchant of Venice;" but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy¹, and the part of the Jew performed by an excellent comedian, yet I cannot but think it was designed tragically by the author. There appears in it a deadly spirit of revenge, such a savage fierceness and fellness, and such a bloody designation of cruelty and mischief, as cannot agree either with the style or characters of comedy. The play itself, take it altogether, seems to me to be one of the most finished of any of Shakespeare's. The tale, indeed, in that part relating to the caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of bond given by Antonio, is too much removed from the rules of probability; but, taking the fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the friendship of Antonio to Bassanio very great, generous, and tender. The whole fourth act (supposing, as I said, the fact to be probable) is extremely fine. But there are two passages that deserve a particular notice. The first

¹ In 1701 Lord Lansdowne produced his alteration of "The Merchant of Venice," at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, under the title of "The Jew of Venice," and expressly calls it a comedy. Shylock was performed by Mr. Dogget. REED.

is what Portia says in praise of mercy, and the other on the power of music. The melancholy of Jaques in "As you Like It" is as singular and odd as it is diverting. And, if what Horace says,

Difficile est propriè communia dicere,

be true, it will be a hard task for any one to go beyond him in the description of the several degrees and ages of man's life, though the thought be old and common enough:

—All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. First the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;
And then, the whining school-boy with his satchel,
And shining morning-face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
Made to his mistress' eye-brow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Ev'n in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shanks; and his big manly voice,
Turning again tow'rd childish treble, pipes

And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

His images are indeed every where so lively, that the thing he would represent stands full before you, and you possess every part of it. I will venture to point out one more, which is, I think, as strong and as uncommon as any thing I ever saw; it is an image of Patience. Speaking of a maid in love, he says,

—She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought,
And sat like Patience on a monument—
Smiling at grief.

What an image is here given! and what a task would it have been for the greatest masters of Greece and Rome to have expressed the passions designed by this sketch of statuary! The style of his comedy is, in general, natural to the characters, and easy in itself; and the wit most commonly sprightly and pleasing, except in those places where he runs into doggerel rhymes, as in "The Comedy of Errors," and some other plays. As for his jingling sometimes, and playing upon words, it was the common vice of the age he lived in: and if we find it in the pulpit, made use of as an ornament to the sermons of some of the gravest divines of those times, perhaps it may not be thought too light for the stage.

But certainly the greatness of this author's genius does no where so much appear, as where he gives his imagination an entire loose, and raises his fancy to a flight above mankind, and the limits of the visible world. Such are his attempts in "The Tempest, Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, and Hamlet." Of these, "The Tempest," however it comes to be placed the first by the publishers of his works, can never have been the first written by him: it seems to me as perfect in its kind as almost any thing we have of his. One may observe, that the unities are kept here with an exactness uncommon to the liberties of his writing; though that was what, I suppose, he valued himself least upon, since his excellencies were all of another kind. I am very sensible that he does, in this play, depart too much from that likeness to truth which ought to be observed in these sort of writings; yet he does it so very finely, that one is easily drawn in to have more faith for his sake, than reason does well allow of. His magic has something in it very solemn and very poetical: and that extravagant character of Caliban is mighty well sustained; shews a wonderful invention in the author, who could strike out such a particular wild image, and is certainly one of the finest and most uncommon grotesques that ever were seen. The observation, which I have been informed three very great men^{*} concurred in making upon this part, was extremely just; *That Shakespeare had not only found out a new character in*

^{*} Lord Falkland, Lord C. J. Vaughan, and Mr. Selden.

his Caliban, but had also devised and adapted a new manner of language for that character.

It is the same magic that raises the Fairies in "Midsummer Night's Dream," the Witches in "Macbeth," and the Ghost in "Hamlet," with thoughts and language so proper to the parts they sustain, and so peculiar to the talent of this writer. If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these by those rules which are established by Aristotle, and taken from the model of a Grecian stage, it would be no very hard task to find a great many faults; but as Shakespeare lived under a kind of mere light of nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of. We are to consider him as a man that lived in a state of almost universal licence and ignorance: there was no established judge; but every one took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. When one considers, that there is not one play before him of a reputation good enough to entitle it to appearance on the present stage, it cannot but be a matter of great wonder that he should advance dramatic poetry so far as he did. The fable is what is generally placed the first among those that are reckoned the constituent parts of a tragic or heroic poem; not, perhaps, as it is the most difficult or beautiful, but as it is the first property to be thought of in the contrivance and course of the whole; and with the fable ought to be considered the fit disposition, order, and conduct of its several parts. As it is not

in this province of the drama that the strength and mastery of Shakespeare lay, so I shall not undertake the tedious and ill-natured trouble to point out the several faults he was guilty of in it. His tales were seldom invented, but rather taken either from true history, or novels and romances: and he commonly made use of them in that order, with those incidents, and that extent of time in which he found them in the authors from whence he borrowed them. Almost all his historical plays comprehend a great length of time, and very different and distinct places; and in his "Antony and Cleopatra," the scene travels over the greatest part of the Roman empire. But in recompense for his carelessness in this point, when he comes to another part of the *drama*, *the manner of his characters, in acting or speaking what is proper for them, and fit to be shewn by the poet*, he may be generally justified, and in very many places greatly commended. For those plays which he has taken from the English or Roman history, let any man compare them, and he will find the character as exact in the poet as the historian. He seems, indeed, so far from proposing to himself any one action for a subject, that the title very often tells you, it is "The Life of King John, King Richard," &c. What can be more agreeable to the idea our historians give of Henry the sixth, than the picture Shakespeare has drawn of him! His manners are every where exactly the same with the story; one finds him still described with simplicity, passive sanctity, want of courage, weakness of mind, and easy submission to the

governance of an imperious wife, or prevailing faction: though at the same time the poet does justice to his good qualities, and moves the pity of his audience for him, by shewing him pious, disinterested, a contemner of the things of this world, and wholly resigned to the severest dispensations of God's providence. There is a short scene in "The Second Part of Henry the Sixth," which I cannot but think admirable in its kind. Cardinal Beaufort, who had murdered the Duke of Gloucester, is shewn in the last agonies on his death-bed with the good king praying over him. There is so much terror in the one, so much tenderness and moving piety in the other, as must touch any one who is capable either of fear or pity. In his "Henry the Eighth," that prince is drawn with that greatness of mind, and all those good qualities which are attributed to him in any account of his reign. If his faults are not shewn in an equal degree, and the shades in this picture do not bear a just proportion to the lights, it is not that the artist wanted either colours or skill in the disposition of them, but the truth, I believe, might be, that he forbore doing it out of regard to Queen Elizabeth, since it could have been no very great respect to the memory of his mistress to have exposed some certain parts of her father's life upon the stage. He has dealt much more freely with the minister of that great king; and certainly nothing was ever more justly written than the character of Cardinal Wolsey. He has shewn him insolent in his prosperity; and yet, by a wonderful address, he makes his fall and ruin the

subject of general compassion. The whole man, with his vices and virtues, is finely and exactly described in the second scene of the fourth act. The distresses likewise of Queen Catharine, in this play, are very movingly touched; and though the art of the poet has screened King Henry from any gross imputation of injustice, yet one is inclined to wish the Queen had met with a fortune more worthy of her birth and virtue. Nor are the manners proper to the persons represented, less justly observed in those characters taken from the Roman history; and of this, the fierceness and impatience of Coriolanus, his courage and disdain of the common people, the virtue and philosophical temper of Brutus, and the irregular greatness of mind in M. Antony, are beautiful proofs. For the two last especially, you find them exactly as they are described by Plutarch, from whom certainly Shakespeare copied them. He has indeed followed his original pretty close, and taken in several little incidents that might have been spared in a play. But, as I hinted before, his design seems most commonly rather to describe those great men in the several fortunes and accidents of their lives, than to take any single great action, and form his work simply upon that. However there are some of his pieces where the fable is founded upon one action only. Such are, more especially, "Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and Othello." The design in "Romeo and Juliet" is plainly the punishment of their two families for the unreasonable feuds and animosities that had been so long kept up between

them, and occasioned the effusion of so much blood. In the management of this story he has shewn something wonderfully tender and passionate in the love-part, and very pitiful in the distress. "Hamlet" is founded on much the same tale with the "Electra" of Sophocles. In each of them a young prince is engaged to revenge the death of his father; their mothers are equally guilty, are both concerned in the murder of their husbands, and are afterwards married to the murderers. There is, in the first part of the Greek tragedy, something very moving in the grief of Electra; but, as Mr. Dacier has observed, there is something very unnatural and shocking in the manner he has given that princess and Orestes in the latter part. Orestes imbrues his hands in the blood of his own mother; and that barbarous action is performed, though not immediately upon the stage, yet so near, that the audience hear Clytemnestra crying out to Ægisthus for help, and to her son for mercy: while Electra, her daughter, and a princess (both of them characters that ought to have appeared with more decency) stands upon the stage, and encourages her brother in the parricide. What horror does this not raise! Clytemnestra was a wicked woman, and had deserved to die; nay, in the truth of the story, she was killed by her own son: but to represent an action of this kind on the stage is certainly an offence against those rules of manners proper to the persons that ought to be observed there. On the contrary, let us only look a little on the conduct of Shakespeare. Hamlet is represented with the same piety towards his father,

and resolution to revenge his death, as Orestes; he has the same abhorrence for his mother's guilt, which, to provoke him the more, is heightened by incest: but it is with wonderful art and justness of judgment, that the poet restrains him from doing violence to his mother. To prevent any thing of that kind, he makes his father's Ghost forbid that part of his vengeance:

But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heav'n,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her.

This is to distinguish rightly between *horror* and *terror*. The latter is a proper passion of tragedy, but the former ought always to be carefully avoided. And certainly no dramatic writer ever succeeded better in raising *terror* in the minds of an audience than Shakespeare has done. The whole tragedy of "Macbeth," but more especially the scene where the king is murdered, in the second act, as well as this play, is a noble proof of that manly spirit with which he wrote; and both shew how powerful he was in giving the strongest motions to our souls that they are capable of. I cannot leave "Hamlet" without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this masterpiece of Shakespeare distinguish itself upon the stage by Mr. Betterton's fine performance of that part; a man, who, though he had no other good qualities, as he has a great many, must have made

his way into the esteem of all men of letters by this only excellency. No man is better acquainted with Shakespeare's manner of expression; and indeed he has studied him so well, and is so much a master of him, that whatever part of his he performs, he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the author had exactly conceived it as he plays it. I must own a particular obligation to him for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this life which I have here transmitted to the public; his veneration for the memory of Shakespeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a veneration¹.

¹ This "Account of the Life of Shakespeare" is printed from Mr. Rowe's second edition, in which it had been abridged and altered by himself after its appearance in 1709. STEEVENS.



DR. JOHNSON'S ANECDOTE
ON SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

WITH

Mr. STEEVENS'S Refutation.

IN the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play; and when Shakespeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man, as he alighted, called for William Shakespeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse, while William Shakespeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakespeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when William Shakespeare was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, *I am Shakespeare's boy, Sir.* In time Shakespeare found higher

employment; but as long as the practice of riding to the playhouse continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of *Shakespeare's boys* ¹.

¹ Johnson's Anecdote seems to want every mark of probability. Though Shakespeare quitted Stratford on account of a juvenile irregularity, we have no reason to suppose that he had forfeited the protection of his father, who was engaged in a lucrative business, or the love of his wife, who had already brought him two children, and was herself the daughter of a substantial yeoman. It is unlikely, therefore, when he was beyond the reach of his prosecutor, that he should conceal his plan of life, or place of residence from those who, if he found himself distressed, could not fail to afford him such supplies as would have set him above the necessity of *holding horses* for subsistence. Mr. Malone has remarked, in his "Attempt to ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakespeare were written," that he might have found an easy introduction to the stage; for Thomas Green, a celebrated comedian of that period, was his townsman, and perhaps his relation. The genius of our author prompted him to write poetry; his connexion with a player might have given his productions a dramatic turn, or his own sagacity might have taught him that fame was not incompatible with profit, and that the theatre was an avenue to both. That it was once the custom to ride on horseback to the play, I am likewise yet to learn. The most popular of the theatres were on the Bank-side; and we are told, by the satirical pamphleteers of the time, that the usual mode of conveyance to these places of amusement was by water; but not a single writer so much as hints at the custom of riding to them, or at the practice of having horses held during the hours of exhibition. Some allusion to this

EULOGIES ON-SHAKESPEARE.

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honour'd
bones

The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Under a starry pointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?

usage (if it had existed) must, I think, have been discovered in the course of our researches after contemporary fashions. Let it be remembered too, that we receive this tale on no higher authority than that of " Cibber's Lives of the Poets," vol. I, p. 130. Sir William Davenant told it to Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe, who (according to Dr. Johnson) related it to Mr. Pope. Mr. Rowe (if this intelligence be authentic) seems to have concurred with me in opinion, as he forebore to introduce a circumstance so incredible into his life of Shakespeare. As to the book which furnishes the anecdote, not the smallest part of it was the composition of Mr. Cibber, being entirely written by a Mr. Shiells, amanuensis to Dr. Johnson when his dictionary was preparing for the press. T. Cibber was in the King's-Bench, and accepted of ten guineas from the booksellers for leave to prefix his name to the work; and it was purposely so prefixed as to leave the reader in doubt whether himself or his father was the person designed. STEEVENS.

Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,
 Hast built thyself a live-long monument:
 For whilst, to th' shame of slow-endav'ring art,
 Thy easy numbers flow; and that each heart
 Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
 Those Delphic lines with deep impression took;
 Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
 Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
 And, so sepulcher'd, in such pomp dost lie,
 That kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.

JOHN MILTON.

Shakespeare, who (taught by none) did first impart
 To Fletcher wit, to lab'ring Jonson art:
 He, monarch-like, gave those his subjects law,
 And is That Nature which they paint and draw.
 Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,
 Whilst Jonson crept, and gather'd all below.
 This did his love, and this his mirth digest:
 One imitates him most, the other best.
 If they have since out-writ all other men,
 'Tis with the drops that fell from Shakespeare's pen.

DRYDEN'S *Prologue to his Alteration of
 the Tempest.*

Shakespeare, the genius of our isle, whose mind
 (The universal mirror of mankind)
 Express'd all images, enrich'd the stage,
 But sometimes stoop'd to please a barb'rous age,

When his immortal bays began to grow,
 Rude was the language, and the humour low.
 He, like the God of day, was always bright;
 But rolling in its course, his orb of light
 Was sully'd and obscur'd, tho' soaring high,
 With spots contracted from the nether sky.
 But, whither is th' advent'rous Muse betray'd?
 Forgive her rashness, venerable Shade!
 May Spring, with purple flow'rs, perfume thy urn,
 And Avon with his greens thy grave adorn!
 Be all thy faults, whatever faults there be,
 Imputed to the times, and not to thee!

FENTON's *Epistle to Southerne*, 1711.

——When lightning fires
 The arch of heav'n, and thunders rock the ground;
 When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
 And ocean, groaning from his lowest bed,
 Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky;
 Amid the gen'ral uproar, while below
 The nations tremble, Shakespeare looks abroad
 From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys
 The elemental war —

AKENSIDE.

When Learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes
 First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose.
 Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
 Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new:

Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
 And panting Time toil'd after him in vain:
 His pow'rful strokes presiding truth impress'd,
 And unresisted passion storm'd the breast.

*Prologue at the opening of Drury-Lane Theatre
 in 1747 by Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.*

Far from the sun and summer gale,
 In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
 What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
 To him the mighty Mother did unveil
 Her awful face. The dauntless Child
 Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smil'd.
 This pencil take (She said) whose colours clear
 Richly paint the vernal year:
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
 This can unlock the gates of joy;
 Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

GRAY's Ode on the Progress of Poesy^r.

In the first seat, in robes of various dyes,
 A noble wildness flashing from his eyes,
 Sat Shakespeare! — In one hand a wand he bore,
 For mighty wonders fam'd in days of yore;

^r Of all the many encomiums passed on our great dramatic poet the most truly poetical one seems to be contained in the third strophe of Mr. Gray's admirable Ode on the PROGRESS OF POESY, particularly in the fine Proso-popœia and Speech of NATURE to him. Dr. J. WARTON.

The other held a globe, which to his will
 Obedient turn'd, and own'd a master's skill:
 Things of the noblest kind his Genius drew,
 And look'd through Nature at a single view:
 A loose he gave to his unbounded soul,
 And taught new lands to rise, new seas to roll;
 Call'd into being scenes unknown before,
 And, passing Nature's bounds, was Something more.

CHURCHILL's *Rosciad*.

THE END.

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Johnson, Samuel

The Lives of the most celebrated English poets with criticisms extracted
from Dr. Johnson

Paris 1805

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